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TOMORROW'S HOUSE

OR

THE TINY ANGEL

"Tell them where you live that Beauty, herself, has given you this key. Let no man take it from you." Page 110

TOMORROW'S HOUSE // OR THE TINY ANGEL

BY
GEORGE O'NEIL
ILLUSTRATED BY
Rose O'Neil

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FIRST EDITION

For Jim, who asked about
Tomorrow's House, and
For Sidney, who kept saying:
"Don't go away till you finish the story."

C589247

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CHAPTER ONE

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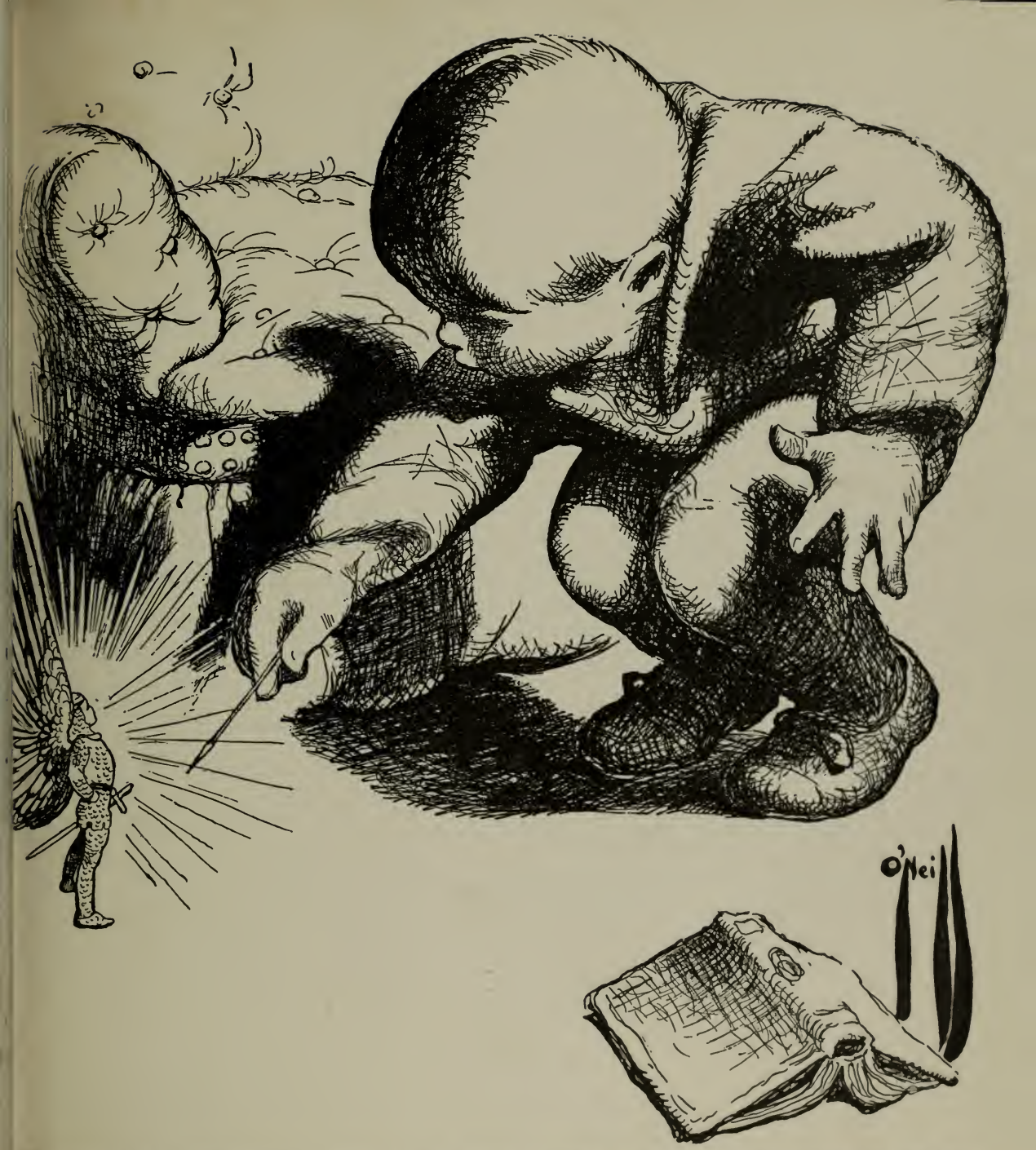
The Shining Spear



"I guess this is your spear," David said. How strange it sounded! Was he really bending toward that dazzling little creature—or was he dreaming? Page 4

CHAPTER ONE

The Shining Spear

It was an unusual day for that time of year. It should have been warm—since dandelions were standing in crowds all over the lawn outside the library window where David sat with his book. But leaning against the window-pane, David felt the cold on his cheek, and he felt sorry for the dandelions caught in the cold, shaking under the wind. Robins were standing lonesomely here and there—apparently listening for worms under the grass. The lilacs which had been out only a few days were shaking small purple stars down on to the ground.

It was much too chilly for April, so a fire was burning in the library. It threw quiet streams of light across the rug and up the walls on to the bookshelves. David turned his head to listen to the soft sound the low fire made. Besides that whispering of the fire there was only one other sound in the house. The big clock in the hall went on counting—breaking minutes off the day with its long pendulum. The clock knocked the minutes off the edge of an hour the way a man in the candy store hit chunks of hard

taffy from a big square—with a small hammer. David listened to the minutes and the fire.

He had been reading on the window-seat a long time. He loved stories but he was tired of his book now. The house was so empty and quiet it pressed on his ears. Everybody was out—everyone but old Elsie in the kitchen. But the kitchen was far away, and David couldn't hear Elsie singing that song she sang to herself all day.

The fire popped, and a shower of sparks flew out into the room and disappeared with little bristly explosions. David leaned his head on his hand. His hair was something like the dandelions in color. His eyes were large and rather green. He squinted them now and watched the fire through his eyelashes. He started to think about something, but no one will ever know what it was going to be . . . because just then something happened. A peculiar noise came from the hall.

David looked at the wide doorway and listened. A light clinking sound came between the clock's tick and its tock. Then a flutter—like a pigeon flying a short distance, then the clinking sound again. Had a bird got into the house? But how could that be? And surely no bird could make that noise—like shaking a handful of silver money. David opened his mouth so that he could listen more carefully.

Flip—flut—thrup—thrupper . . . Tink—chink—chinker.

The flutter and the other noise came and stopped. David was just going to get up from his seat in the window, but as he started to move, a short shining little pole of steel—about the size of a knitting needle—came whizzing round the corner of the door and sailed halfway across the room toward the fireplace and fell to the carpet. It shone very brightly in the fire-light and David stared at it with his green eyes stretched wide open. What in the world was happening?

How could that little piece of steel come sailing into the room like that by itself? Just as David started to get up and walk toward the shining thing on the carpet something more amazing happened. Something was standing in the doorway. David blinked and looked hard. The thing was just about the size of a pigeon, and it had wings, but it was *not* a bird. That was plain. Was it a new kind of mechanical toy? The wings were just settling along its sides—*his* sides. It was a creature in a suit of shining armor—like a knight. David realized in a flash that it was that coat of silver armor that had made the clinking sound. There was a kind of ring of light all round the figure—a ring that shone out like a street-lamp at evening. At first this light dazzled David a little, but when he began to see clearly he wondered how it could be that he was looking at such a thing there in his own house, in

the library door. For there was no mistaking. This was an angel—an angel with a beautiful face and a crown of glittering hair under his helmet. But how could he be that small—that perfect tiny little angel in the doorway, measuring about six inches from head to toe?

The little angel looked straight at David. He looked at first as if he might be ready to quarrel, but as David made no move (he was too astonished to move a muscle), the angel began to search the carpet. He stood by the door running his eyes over the floor as people do when they have dropped something.

Slowly David realized what the angel was looking for. He rose from the window-seat and stepped to the middle of the room. He stooped and picked up the little piece of steel. He turned. The angel was standing still, watching David cautiously.

"I guess this is your spear," David said. How strange it sounded! Was he really bending toward that dazzling little creature, handing him that long needle—or was he dreaming?

Suddenly the little angel opened his wings and darted up from the floor. Fanning lightly, like a large humming bird, he flew to David's hand and caught the tiny spear with both fists. It was heavy for him, David could see that. The angel hovered there a moment and then settled to the floor again. He glanced up at David's face. Was he going to speak? Was it possible?

The angel rested his spear against his shoulder and looked at the fire. David noticed that he was just about half as high as the low heap of the logs—burned down but still flickering. The little angel looked rather weary, David thought.

"It's cold today," David said. "Shall I put another log on?" And he bent down and laid in another log on the fire. As sparks flashed out into the room the angel fluttered away as if frightened. He flew up to a table and stood against a bowl of sweet-peas. There was a smell of something singed in the room.

"Your feathers—" David pointed to a spark on the angel's left wing. The angel shook it out quickly. Wasn't he going to speak after all?

"Yes," David went on, "it's awfully cold for this time of year. I feel sorry for the robins, coming up here from the south and finding this kind of weather."

All of a sudden there was a noise like a little glass Christmas-tree bell tinkling. David looked down and saw that the angel had laughed.

"I suppose I needn't have thrown my spear." The angel's voice sounded like raindrops falling into a pond. "I usually throw my spear ahead of me—just in case there might be danger ahead, an enemy. You never know, and it's wiser to play safe. Of course

I knew you would be pretty safe, and now since you feel that way about the robins . . ." The angel glanced round the room. "Couldn't we sit down?"

"Why, yes! Have this chair," David said, and pushed forward a big chair of red leather.

"Thank you." The angel gave his wings a flirt and rose from the table, dropping to the seat of the chair. But as he lit, his foot slipped on the smooth leather. He spread his wings just in time to keep from falling and circled the library several times.

"Do you mind if I find a place up here?" he asked, waving his spear toward the bookshelves.

David reached up and drew a fat book from a row of books. It was one of the dictionary set. It dropped to the floor, slamming loudly.

"Perfect!" The angel alighted on the shelf and sat down between two books; one was marked BAC to BULG and the other, BYP to CAC. He laid his spear across his knees and looked down at David who sat in the chair by the fire.

"You and I," said the little six-inch angel, "have a lot to talk about. But first of all—there's the question of my horse."

"Your horse?"

"My horse—Thunderstruck. He's lost."

"Lost?" David could do nothing but echo.

"Lost. And you have something to do with it. Oh, yes you have! But we'll get that straightened out. Only it may take time."

The angel took off his tiny helmet and cleared his throat, looking very hard at David. But there was something very friendly in the angel's eyes.

CHAPTER TWO

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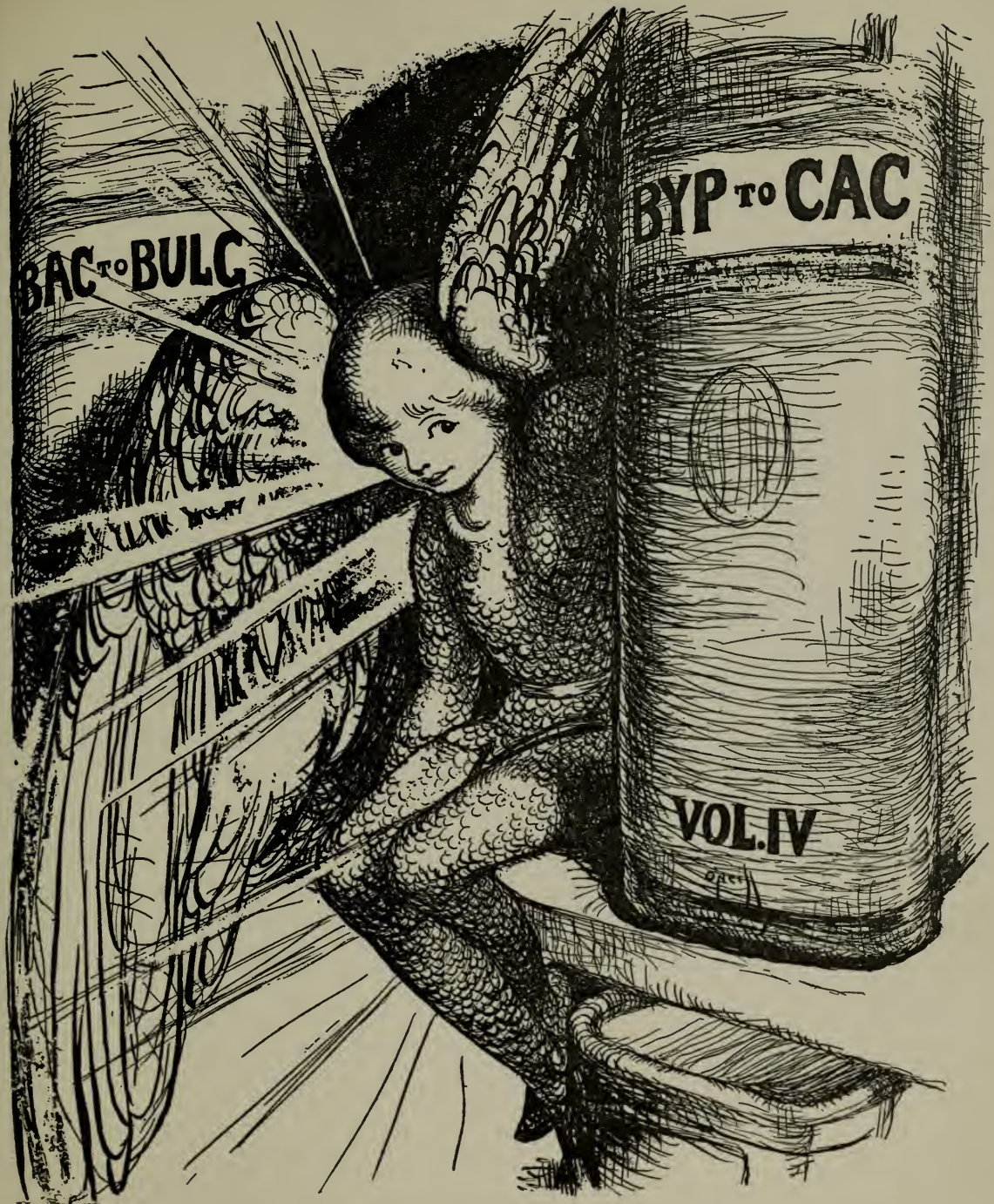
The Question of Thunderstruck



The angel turned round on the bookshelf and glanced into the hall as if he expected to see someone passing there. Page 14

CHAPTER TWO

The Question of Thunderstruck

JUST at that moment the clock in the hall struck the hour.

"Ah," the little angel said, "there goes Three o'clock. Maybe he'll find him. Only I'd hate to have to go all the way to the lost department to get my horse again."

David stared at the angel with a puzzled expression.

"I see you don't understand," the angel remarked. "Perhaps you don't even know about the hours, about what they do when the clock gets through with them."

"Why, no, I guess I don't," David said.

"Well, to begin with, you see the hours are ladies and gentlemen. Twelve o'clock is a woman—the queen-mother of the hours. One o'clock is her first-born, and, fortunately, a boy. Then Two is a girl, Three is a boy, Four, a girl, and so on. Every other hour is a boy or a girl, only, of course, since time began, the hours have grown up. They are men and women now, with responsibilities. The even hours are women, the odd hours are gentlemen. They have different kinds of dispositions. Now Three is an odd hour, but

he has an even disposition. Haven't you ever noticed him leaving your house?"

David shook his head. The angel turned round on the bookshelf and glanced into the hall as if he expected to see someone passing there. David looked, too, but nobody was there, and the clock was ticking in its regular way.

"He's already gone," the angel said. "I'm sorry you didn't get a look at Three. He's very pleasant looking—blonde, tall, with quite a contented face—as a rule. They call him the unworried hour, nothing bothers Three o'clock. Now Five! Five is just the opposite, sad, melancholy, dark-eyed. Well, you want to know where the hours go, I'm sure. Where did you suppose they went?"

David thought a minute. "Why, I *sort of* thought they just fell back in the clock somewhere."

"And lay there in a heap until they were needed again? That's the trouble with most people. They just *sort of* think about things, and they have perfectly ridiculous notions like that. Oh no! When the hours are off duty they have to keep on doing things like the rest of us. And what they do is this: they search for lost things, and what they find they take back to the lost department. That's very far away, so far, that only an angel can get there. You've probably heard that Time flies. Well, so does an angel. Now, the point is: if my horse, Thunderstruck, is lost instead of

busy somewhere, he's probably been found by one of the hours. And that means a long trip for me. Suppose we try to overtake Three o'clock and ask him if he's heard any of the other hours mention my horse lately."

The angel jumped to his feet between the two big books. He caught up his spear and looked at David sharply. "Would you care to meet Three o'clock?" he asked. But before David could answer, the angel frowned. "You're too big—" He put one finger to an eyebrow, thinking. "We'll have to reduce your size. You couldn't get into a mole-hill that way."

What did the angel mean about the mole-hill? But he was saying so many strange things that David didn't interrupt him. He waited for the angel to go on talking.

"I'm sure your garden has mole-hills in it," he said.

"Lots," David replied. He had always noticed the soft heaps of earth ploughed up in the garden, making paths, almost. He wondered why the moles dug so much, what they were after, and what their tunnels were like inside. He had never seen a mole, and he wanted to, very much.

"Are we going into a mole-hole?" he asked.

"Possibly," the angel answered. "If you can be made small enough. That's the problem. It's more than likely that Three o'clock has gone out through your mole-burrows, since he's

probably begun to search for my horse around your house."

"But what would your horse be doing in one of those places?" David was astonished.

"Why do you suppose I came here today?" the angel asked. And David could not answer, so the angel answered himself. "I told you you had something to do with my horse being lost."

"But I've never even seen your horse," David said.

"People can do a lot of damage to things they've never seen," the angel replied. "As a matter of fact, all you people in this house don't see much more than the noses on your faces. There's a great deal going on round you that you don't see. Sometimes you walk right through a very important event, kicking it all to pieces, not even seeing what it is you step on."

"Like what, for instance?" David asked carefully.

"Well, never mind, never mind!" the angel said. "Stick to the subject of my horse. Now I believe my horse has been doing something for you for quite a while, and you've never even seen him."

"*What* has your horse been doing for me?" David was very interested.

"My horse's name is Thunderstruck. Well, how do you feel about thunder yourself?" The angel flew up suddenly from the shelf and whirred brightly across the room. He landed on David's

knee. David blinked. The angel was staring at him very hard, with his little helmet pushed forward carelessly. "Now just what is it?" the angel demanded. "Just what have you been thinking about thunder?"

It seemed strange that the angel should ask that question. David *had* been thinking something rather queer about thunder just the night before, in bed.

"I can see by your eyes that you have been imagining something," the angel observed. "Yes, that's it. You've been imagining something about thunder. Now, out with it! What were you imagining about the thunder?"

"Well," David began a little guiltily, "you see last night there was a storm."

"Quite so," the angel said.

"It thundered a lot," David went on.

"Are you afraid of thunder?" the angel interrupted.

"Not exactly afraid, but it's loud and its kind of queer, and—I wonder where it comes from."

"Ah!" the angel exclaimed.

"I lie in bed when it thunders and I hear thunder come rattling down on the roof and rolling off into the garden, and I think—I wonder—"

"Go on, this is important," the angel urged.

"Well it seems as if the thunder must land somewhere, and it sounds as if it falls in our garden. I hear it break up and roll, and I wonder if it isn't lying in big chunks all over the ground around our house."

"So, that's it!" the angel said.

David was embarrassed. "It sounds foolish to tell, I know," he murmured.

"You've never asked anybody where the thunder went?" the angel enquired.

"No."

"Why not?"

But David didn't answer.

"You imagine lots of things, I daresay, and never ask your parents or anyone grown-up about them," the angel said, and David nodded.

"Well, that's just where my horse comes in. Now in this case he's doing the thing he likes best—helping you with the thunder. To keep you from feeling foolish and getting into trouble with grown people by imagining things they wouldn't approve of, Thunderstruck comes down here every time it thunders and gets to work hauling away the thunder-chunks which you have imagined lying in your garden."

"Does it really fall there?" David sat forward suddenly, almost shaking the angel off his knee.

"Anything you imagine is so—for anyone else who imagines that same thing. Now we angels can imagine almost anything. So you see how much comes true for us when people like you begin imagining. Well, long ago, I began to miss my horse. It took me some time to discover where he went. Once, on my way from one cloud to another, I made him hurtle a great thunderbolt. He enjoyed it so much that afterwards whenever it thundered I couldn't hold him. He scampered off looking for thunderbolts to hurdle. Now, my business is to look after people like you—especially when they get too lonely, but, of course, I need a little help. When I saw how my horse felt about thunder I gave him his name. He seemed to think I approved of his actions then, and he took it on himself to run off wherever he could do something about thunder—whether I was riding him or not. Well, he does a lot of good, and I can't object. But it's inconvenient for me at times. Today I had to get to your place the best way I could. But we're wasting time. We must chase after Three o'clock. Undoubtedly, now that I know the facts, my horse has been dragging thunder into your mole-holes. We must start looking at once. The question is to make you small enough. Let me think. You don't

mind my standing on your knee, I hope?" the angel asked politely.

David shook his head. "I'm delighted to have you," he said. And he meant it. What a funny, interesting little creature the angel was in his shining armor, balancing his spear over one shoulder as he stared into the fire and thought.

CHAPTER THREE

•

The Fretful Mole

"Whoa!" the angel cried. . . . "You look quite small enough. Come."
"I can't get down!" David called. Page 27

CHAPTER THREE

The Fretful Mole

"How big do you feel?" the angel asked David suddenly.

He didn't quite know how to answer. He was afraid that the angel was beginning to think him stupid.

"That's odd!" the angel exclaimed. "You shrank a little just then. What were you thinking?"

David told him that he had been wondering if he appeared a stupid boy.

"Ah," the angel said, "I know exactly how to reduce you for the mole-hole! A very simple case! All you need do is think of something to make you feel small. You understand, when people are embarrassed or ashamed of themselves we say that they look very small. And often when people feel guilty they say they feel small—'about that big'." The angel held up his thumb and first finger almost touching, to show David how big he meant. "Now what was the meanest thing you ever did in your life?" He watched David intently. "Think quickly."

"Once I sat down on a canary bird," David answered.

"On purpose?"

"Accidentally."

"Well, then, it didn't make you feel small, did it?"

"No. Big," David replied.

"That won't do. Think of something you did deliberately. Have you ever made fun of people—mimicked someone just to make him feel miserable?"

David felt a queer quick pulling sensation all over his body. Suddenly, the angel looked a foot high on his knee instead of six inches.

"Ah, that worked!" the angel cried. "You shrank quite a lot then. Now think of something else you're ashamed of. I suppose you whine, now and then, begging people for things, asking questions just to annoy your parents when they're busy?"

David felt the shrinking feeling again. He was really beginning to feel small. Everything in the room looked much larger than it usually did.

"Now you admit something like that of your own accord," the angel said. "We must hurry."

When David answered he was astonished to hear how his voice sounded. He felt like a talking doll. His words came out so little.

"Once I threw a stone at a dog."

"Something else. Quick!" The angel jumped to the floor from David's knee. It wasn't much of a jump for him now.

"Once I robbed a bird's nest. And once—"

"Whoa!" the angel cried. "Don't tell that whatever it is. Don't think of anything else. You'd disappear entirely! You look quite small enough. Come!" The angel waved his spear, and started out.

"I can't get down!" David called after him. And now he saw the arms of the red leather chair on either side like walls, and the floor looked far away.

"Jump and I'll catch you," the angel said.

So David jumped with the angel's help. And he was amazed to find that he reached only to the angel's shoulder now, and that it seemed a full-sized spear that the angel was carrying—instead of a knitting needle.

Together they hurried from the library. A window in the dining-room was open about four inches. The angel saw this and told David to catch him round the waist. And that way they flew up to the sill and crawled out and flew down again to the garden.

They lit in some dandelions and David was surprised to see a bright yellow flower almost at his shoulder. There were some raindrops still on the dandelion, and they looked as big as the crystals he used in playing marbles.

"I see a fresh mole-hill near that bush," the angel said. "It's just dug up. Maybe we can find an opening and get in there."

Walking through the grass toward the lilac bush, David wondered if Elsie, the cook, could see him from the kitchen window. He hoped not, because if she caught sight of him there, so little, with the warrior angel at his side, she would surely run out and call him back. She would never let him go down a mole-hole. So he began to hurry, stumbling over twigs and pebbles.

Yes, there was the entrance all right, near the roots of the lilac bush. David glanced up and saw the flowers like great purple clouds over his head. The bush was larger than any tree he had ever seen. The flowers looked so heavy he was afraid they might fall, and he knew he would be badly hurt if a full-bloomed lilac-spray fell on him there.

Suddenly he remembered *Alice-in-Wonderland*— how she had found herself so small after drinking something from a bottle. He hesitated as the angel stepped into the round opening of the mole's tunnel. What if he should never get back? How was he going to grow big again? He had no bottles or cake like Alice's to use.

"I hear the mole in conversation—way down," the angel said. "Hurry. I think she's talking to Three o'clock."

That was too much for David. He forgot to be afraid. He had

never even seen a mole. To hear one talking—to that pleasant young fellow, Three o'clock—he was willing to take risks.

He put his right leg carefully into the hole, then the left. He glanced up just then and was puzzled to see his own house *laughing at him!* How could that be? Still, he was quite sure that his house was laughing silently. It leaned a little toward the house next door, and it said, without actually speaking: "Don't say a word, my dear! But do look at David going down that hole in the ground. Now *what* on earth do you suppose the child is up to? There—by the mole-hill!"

And the Huckins' house, next door, turned a pair of upstairs windows that direction and its back porch stretched in a smile. "They certainly have their hands full with that child," it answered. "Crawling under mole-hills! Per-fect-ly ri-dic-u-lous!"

"He's actually doing it—making a mountain out of a mole-hill," David's house said. "Look at him—knee-high to a grasshopper! Now how in heaven's name do you suppose he got himself into *that* condition?" The house wrinkled its roof in a worried expression.

David let go of the weed he was holding on to and slid into the hole. It was dark there, but it was better than being watched and discussed by those houses.

The tunnel ran a little distance and then twisted. David crept

round the first curve with his head bent to keep from bumping the ceiling. Farther on was another curve. He remembered how crooked the mole-track was in the garden. He couldn't see the angel, but he heard his voice up ahead somewhere. And a squealing little voice answered, complainingly.

"I certainly *have* seen your horse! He's been dragging huge chunks of thunder in here every time it stormed lately, littering my place something awful! Pulling them into my reception hall, across the living-room rug, scattering it all over my house. It's a pretty hoddayoudo, I *must* say! But as to where he is now, I don't know and I don't *care!*"

Turning another corner, David saw the angel talking to an odd little creature wearing the thickest imaginable spectacles. This was, of course, the mole. She was sitting in a rocking-chair, and her hands, like a pair of fish-fins, hung down on either side of the chair. The mole was wearing a pair of gloves that went all the way to her shoulders—such as her shoulders were—and she rocked back and forth and went on squeaking fretfully.

"I wish people could let me alone," she complained. "I have trouble enough, heaven knows, digging away to keep body and soul together! And I'm not as young as I used to be, and my eyes never *were* any too good, and now I've been obliged to have the prescription changed again, and—"

David could not help interrupting. "I thought moles didn't have any eyes at all!"

The mole stopped rocking and turned her thick glasses toward David.

"How many moles are you acquainted with, may I enquire?"

"Why—none," David answered.

"Then why have an opinion about us at all? You have a lot to learn, young man. When I was your age I wasn't permitted to express my opinions until they were asked for." The mole began to rock again.

"I beg your pardon," David said.

"Oh, well," the mole sighed, "I don't know what we're all coming to, anyway! I don't see what it's all for—all this worrying and working! What thanks do we get for it? It's just dig, dig, dig, to keep body and soul together. And no sooner do we get a day's digging done than something comes along and spoils all our work. Oh well, that's life, I suppose!" The mole sighed again and rocked back and forth until David thought her chair might tip over backward.

"You're quite sure my horse hasn't been taken away by one of the hours?" the angel asked.

The mole stopped rocking. "Young man," she said, "when I say a thing once that's all that's necessary. Do you mean to imply

that I'm a barefaced fibber? Here I am—digging away, to keep body and soul together—"

"You've said that more than once," David interrupted again.

At that the mole got up haughtily from her rocking-chair and crawled toward a cupboard. She began to peer at bottles on some shelves, squeaking to herself: "Impudence . . . respect for elders . . . worse and worse. . . ."

The angel nodded his head to David, meaning that it was time to go, but David was too interested in what the mole was going to do with her bottles. He watched her as she began to take off her long gloves. She was very awkward, and she kept on complaining as she bit and jerked first at one glove and then the other.

"They don't make gloves the way they used to! This is my fourth pair since the first of March, and they're already falling to pieces. It takes a pretty sum to keep me in gloves! It's so damp down here, they rot in no time. But I've got to keep my hands! I can't afford to spoil them, they're my best feature."

Now the mole got one glove off and took up a long file from a shelf. She squinted and began to file her nails carefully. "Such a time as I have keeping my nails in condition—what with digging, digging, digging!" Then she got the other glove off and took up a buffer and began to polish the nails of one hand. "It's a pretty hoddayoudo when a woman with hands like mine must wear them

to the bone to keep body and soul together! When I was a girl I was famous for my beautiful hands. Moles came from miles around to see my hands . . ." She left off polishing and began to peer at the bottles again. "Now what *has* become of my beauty-cream?" She pushed her nose in among the bottles.

"Come," the angel said to David. "She's forgotten we're here." And he started down the tunnel.

As David followed the angel he glanced back at the fretful mole. She was reaching for a big white bottle on the highest shelf. It tipped suddenly and fell to the floor, breaking loudly. A thick white liquid spilled all over the mole's head and ran trickling to the floor. She squealed terribly.

"My last bottle of beauty-cream! What *am* I going to do! If people wouldn't come running through my house, getting me all upset! I'm so worried I don't know what I'm doing . . ."

Her squeals died away as the angel led David swiftly through the passageway.

"Why does she fret so? What's she so worried about?" David asked.

"She enjoys it," the angel answered. "Quick! There goes Three o'clock. Listen!"

And far ahead somewhere David heard a clear voice singing.

"Hey nonnie nonnie ho,
With a hey down dee.
However the old songs go
They mean very little to me.

Hey nonnie, ho nonnie,
Sing all the year.
No matter what the date is,
Spring is here!"

"Hang it!" the angel exclaimed. "He's gone. He's neither up nor down by this time." And the angel stood still a minute as if thinking.

"Neither up nor down?" David repeated. "He must be one or the other."

"Not at all," the angel replied. "It's hard for you to understand. But suppose somebody snatched the whole world right out from under your feet and threw it away—as if it were a ball—leaving you just where you were. Where would you be?"

"Why, I'd be standing in the air."

"Yes. But standing up or down?"

David puzzled a minute. "I guess I'd just be standing—somewhere."

"Precisely," said the angel. "You'd be neither up nor down, just nowhere, like everything else."

"It all depends on what you're up or down *from*, then, doesn't it?" David asked, proud of grasping the angel's meaning.

"That's it," the angel said. "Now Three o'clock is neither up nor down—since he's jumped off the earth. Well, I'll have to go to the lost department, after all. You'd better get back to the library."

"Can't I go with you?" David asked. "I like places that are far away."

The angel hesitated.

Suddenly something began to happen in the mole's tunnel. The roof was rising, slowly, high. The walls were sinking away. In place of the clay walls silver columns—like trees—began to take shape. A strange silver light began to glow all round, and a soft sound like wind in the leaves came from above on all sides.

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CHAPTER FOUR

The Forest of Fountains

"The Forest of Fountains is halfway to Tomorrow's House." Page 42

CHAPTER FOUR

The Forest of Fountains

"WELL, you amaze me!" the angel said, staring at David, and looking more radiant than ever in this new light, all silvery.

"What have I to do with it?" David looked up at the great silver columns rising all round.

"What have you been trying to imagine now?" the angel demanded. "I told you that anything you imagine is real for anyone else who can imagine the same thing. Now here we are on our way to—" The angel stopped speaking a minute. Then he said. "I mustn't even mention it. You're too young."

"No, I'm not. *Please* say it!" David had a feeling that the angel was going to mention something that David himself had been thinking about.

"We're on our way to—you know perfectly well where," the angel said.

"Where?" David held his breath.

"And so you've been wondering about *that!*" the angel replied. "Don't you know that you can't go there? *Nobody* can."

"Where?" David repeated.

"To that place you've been trying to imagine—Tomorrow's House."

"How did you know?" David was amazed. "Where *is* Tomorrow's House? Where *does* Tomorrow live? Why *can't* we go where Tomorrow is?"

"Nobody ever has been there," the angel said very seriously.

"Well, I'm going," David said. "I'm going to find out where Tomorrow's House is." He turned suddenly about. But he had a strange feeling now that all directions were the same. There was no East, no West, no North or South, in this place. He looked above and saw that what he had thought were silver trees were really great fountains, fountains shooting so high that he couldn't see the tops of them, and their spray disappeared in a silvery blue cloud but did not fall back to the ground. On all sides there were hundreds of these fountains.

"It's a forest of fountains," David said.

"Yes," the angel replied. "The Forest of Fountains is halfway to Tomorrow's House. This is your doing."

"But it's wonderful," David remarked. "I like it."

"People get very lonely here at times," the angel said rather sadly. Then he glanced up sharply and aimed his spear as if he meant to throw it toward the trunk of a great fountain. But he

lowered the spear and smiled. A queer grunting noise sounded near by.

Coming through the fountain-trees David saw a small tan pig with anxious eyes.

"I forgot to tell you that, for certain people, the Willing Swine turns up here, sometimes," the angel said. "Just why, I don't know. But he seems to feel he ought to act the part of host here—to receive visitors to the Forest of Fountains. Unfortunately, he's not very gifted. He does nothing but grunt in a friendly fashion. But he wants you to feel at home."

By this time the pig was close to David, staring up with an anxious, willing expression. It grunted cordially.

"How does a pig live in a place like this?" David asked.

The angel almost grinned and answered: "He lives by looking at pearls."

"By looking at pearls?" David repeated, thinking the angel was joking.

"Well, by sniffing at them. Now and then people who come here throw him a pearl or two, and he seems to get his nourishment by sniffing at the pearls."

Just then the pig began to nuzzle David's hand, grunting eagerly.

"I'm sorry," David said. "I haven't any pearls to throw you."

But the pig looked as if he didn't believe David.

"Never mind," said the angel. "He'll be just as pleased if we let him stay round at all. Many people are very rude to him here, either ignoring him completely or—sometimes—going so far as to kick him roughly, calling him unkind names. So if you just don't order him away—or remind him that he's a pig—he'll be grateful to you."

David thought it an unusual way for a pig to feel. He bent down and patted the beast's head, and this seemed to delight the poor creature so that it snorted and wriggled a long time.

Through the rushing noise that the fountains made, another sound reached David's ears. It was a sharp hissing noise, alarmingly loud after a minute or two.

"The other inhabitant," the angel remarked. "Don't be frightened."

Along the silver floor of the fountain-forest a beautiful green serpent glided toward them. But, very curiously, along the serpent's body were twined wreaths and garlands of flowers. And the serpent seemed to be smiling, hissing as graciously as it could. David wasn't the least bit afraid of snakes. He thought them very interesting. And this one—all dressed up in flowers—seemed most unusual.

"He's very eager to make friends," the angel explained.

"Snakes haven't many, you know. This serpent considers himself a misunderstood person."

And the serpent glided forward still smiling.

"His one great fault," the angel continued, "is that he talks too much. He's very vain of his wisdom. You'll have a chance to judge for yourself how wise the serpent is."

As he drew near the serpent waved his tongue. Then he commenced to talk, and he talked on and on. His S's were louder and longer than most people's, but otherwise his conversation was not so different from much of the talk David had heard—and overheard—from many grown people.

"S-s-s-o glad to s-s-s-ee you!" the sociable serpent said gushingly. "Do s-s-s-it down . . . there's s-s-so much to s-s-s-say!"

And with his tongue wagging, the serpent showed his wisdom as follows:

"S-s-s-such s-s-splendid weather we're having." The serpent coiled carefully so that the flowers hung becomingly. "I s-s-s-s-uppose you've never s-s-s-s-een our fountains before? Do you travel much? Travel broadens one s-s-s-so, I always s-s-s-say. Don't you agree?"

David thought a second. So far his own travels seemed to have done nothing but shorten him. He told the serpent that, and it

threw its head high in the air and laughed—without making any sound at all.

"S-s-s-such a s-s-s-s-plendid s-s-s-sense of humor you have!" the serpent said. "A s-s-s-sense of humor is s-s-s-so important, I always s-s-s-say. Now I've kept mine in s-s-s-pite of everything. But I mus-s-s-t s-s-say it's s-s-s-suffering that makes us wise. I s-s-s-suppose you've come here to s-s-s-eek s-s-s-ome advic-c-c-ce from me. Everyone has heard of my wisdom. Now, what advice can I give you?"

David didn't wish to offend the serpent by telling it he'd never heard how wise it was. He tried to think of some question to ask to flatter the vain snake and give it a chance to show off. He was about to ask if the serpent knew anything about Tomorrow's House, but before he could speak the hissing began again.

"Ss-s-s-suppose I just tell you a few things for your own good on general princ-c-c-iples. I've lived a long time. I've s-s-s-een the world, so I know what I'm talking about when I s-s-say: Where there's a will there's a way . . . You can't kill two birds with one s-s-stone . . . Don't put all your eggs in one bas-s-sket . . . A rolling s-s-s-stone gathers no mos-s-s-s."

The serpent paused a minute, and looked at David as if he had said the most important thing that had ever been said by anybody.

But David couldn't think of answers to those remarks. So the serpent began again:

"Think twic-c-ce before you s-s-speak . . . Ss-s-save your breath to cool your porridge . . . The proof of the pudding is in the tas-s-sting. . . . Time and tide wait for no man . . ."

"Speaking of time," the angel interrupted. "I wonder if you've seen—"

But the serpent went right on, ignoring him.

"S-s-s-silence is golden . . . No use crying over s-s-s-spilt milk . . . An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure . . . Birds of a feather flock together . . . Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Again the serpent paused and stared at David to see how he was taking so much wisdom. The serpent's expression seemed to say: Well, what have you to say to that? And David felt he ought to answer, so he began to say whatever came into his head. And running it all together just as the serpent had done, he started off.

"England expects every man to do his duty," David said gravely. "Don't give up the ship. It's a far greater thing I do now than I have ever done before. Who touches a hair of yon girl's head, dies like a dog; march on, he said. The boy stood on the burning deck. I cannot tell a lie, Father, I did it with my little

hatchet. Give me liberty or give me death. Yo ho ho, and a bottle of rum. . . ."

A strange look was coming over the serpent's face. David was afraid that he'd been making the wrong kind of conversation. He wracked his brain and began:

"Dickery dickery dock, the mouse ran up the clock. 'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house—"

The serpent lifted its head so high that David stopped in alarm. There was a terribly proud look in the serpent's face now, and it hissed out: "Children should be s-s-s-s-seen, not heard!" It gave its whole body a shake. "I bid you good-day!" And swiftly the serpent slid off through the fountains.

The Willing Swine gave a grunt and David turned to the angel.

"What's the matter with the old thing?" he asked.

"You hurt its feelings." The angel grinned. "Let *me* give you a little advice. Never talk back when people are telling you what they know. It annoys them. The serpent thought you were making fun of him."

"I was only trying to remember all I could from the first three Readers," David said. "I didn't want to look stupid."

"But that's just the way the wise serpent wanted you to look," the angel replied. "Never mind. Now we can get on with our

business. But perhaps you'd like a bite of something to eat before we go any farther? I forget. I eat so little myself."

David hadn't been thinking about eating, but he didn't mind the angel's suggestion. He always liked a little something to eat.

"But surely there's no food around here," he said.

"Oh yes there is," the angel answered. "It's not like the sort you're used to. That's really why I mentioned it. I think you ought to see a feast-bush."

"A feast-bush?"

"There must be one hereabouts. Let's see," the angel said, peering past the nearest fountains. But already the pig was trotting off, turning his head and grunting in a tone of hospitality. And David understood that he was leading the way to the nearest feast-bush. So he and the angel followed, and very soon, through the rows of bright fountains, David saw a bush, all glittery, in the distance. It was not like any bush David had ever seen. And instead of growing down into the ground with roots, the branches, all of silver, rose from a jar which looked as if it had been carved out of a great diamond. All over the big bush David saw things hanging, things of many different shapes, they looked like fruits and berries, but everything about that bush glittered, even that strange fruit. There were things that looked like peaches except that they were gold, there were grapes that seemed to be pure silver, and

there were clusters of berries that appeared to be bunches of rubies or opals or sapphires. David did not see how anyone could possibly eat those dazzling fruits. And he was a little disappointed, because he was really ready for a bite of something good.

"What would you like?" the angel asked.

"But I couldn't eat anything made of silver or gold," David said.

"Try," the angel answered. "It melts in your mouth. It's true this is rather remarkable food, but I think if you taste it you will find that it gives you pleasant feelings such as ordinary food can never give you. People who have eaten from this bush never forget about it. Take something, do."

Rather timidly, then, David reached up for a silver grape, only one. He broke it from the large bright bunch and as he did that the whole bush trembled a little and tinkled—making a sweet gay music.

"That is a very good choice—to start with," the angel remarked. "That is a grape of joy. I'm sure you will like it."

And David was amazed to discover that the silver grape did actually melt in his mouth, and when that happened all through him he felt a remarkable warm happiness. And he decided that nothing had ever been sweeter than that grape.

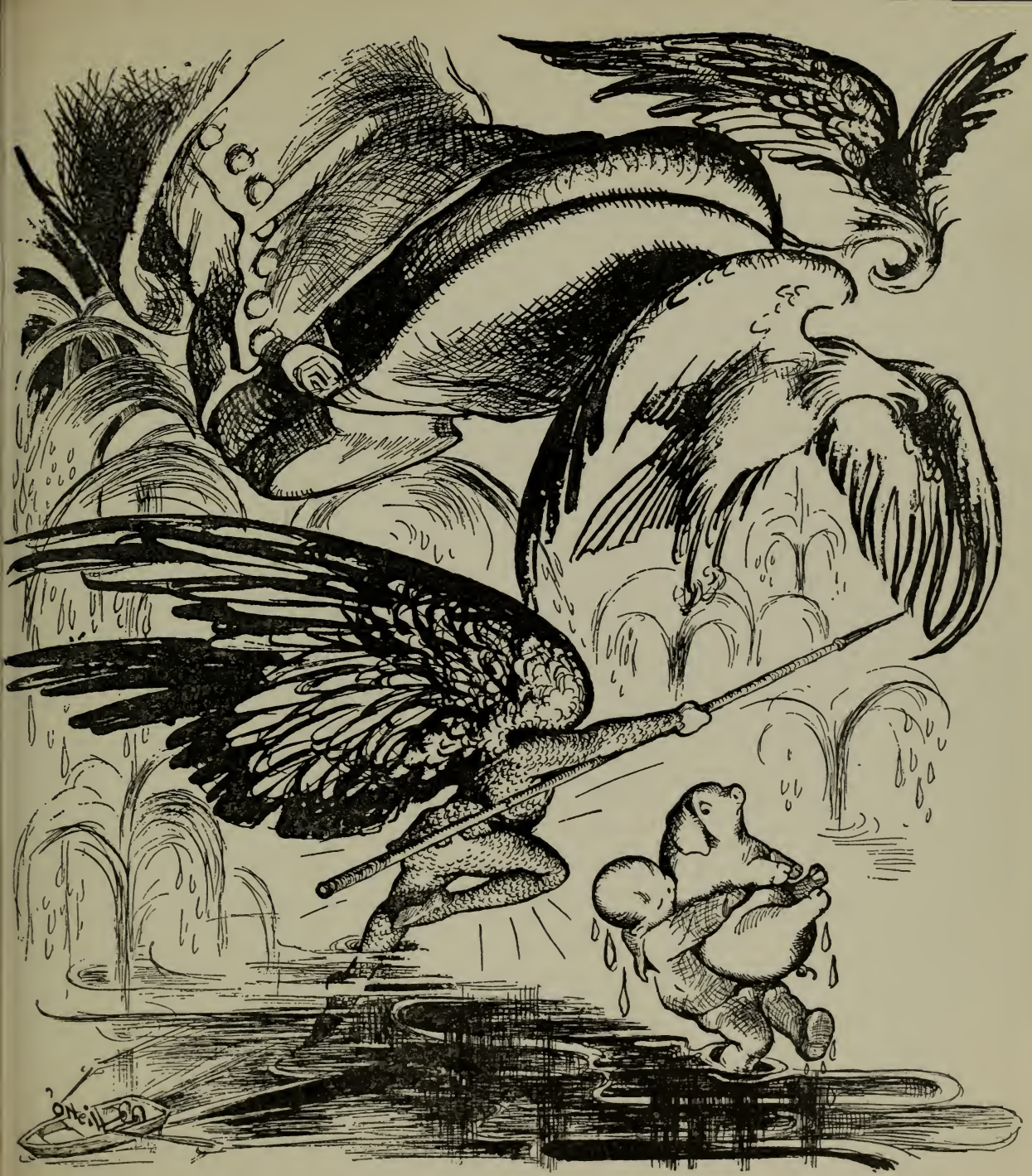
"I'll try one of those golden apples, now," he said.

"Do," said the angel. "Those are the apples of delight."

So David pulled an apple from the bush, and once more the bush made music, this time it seemed to play a regular dance tune. David was indeed delighted as he ate the apple. He felt it melting in his mouth and he looked delightedly at the wonderful bush, wondering what he would choose next.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Heavy-footer



"It's a Heavy-footer, a kind of giant . . ." Through two fountains a huge foot appeared. Page 60

CHAPTER FIVE

The Heavy-footer

THE angel suggested different kinds of fruit for David on the glittering feast-bush. So David tasted pleasure-berries, then the peach-of-hoping—which was especially good, making him hope that many more exciting things would happen. And he liked the cheer-cherries, very much, they made him almost giddy with good spirits. He tried a fun-fig, also, and as he chewed it (it was quite ticklish in his mouth) he found himself running round the fountains and laughing in a perfectly wild way. And while he did that he saw the angel sit down under the glittering bush with a small blue berry in his fingers. The angel began to nibble the berry slowly, and David could not help laughing louder—because the tiny angel looked funny sitting there in his suit of armor, nibbling a small berry as a squirrel would nibble a nut.

"This is the satisfaction-berry," the angel said. "It's enough for me. Laugh all you like."

But soon the effect of the fun-fig wore off, and David came back to the bush and began to look for something else. On the

very highest branch he caught sight of a large fruit that looked something like an orange, only it seemed to glow and smoke a little as if it were on fire.

"There's what I want," David said.

The angel glanced up. "I might have known you would," he said.

"But I can't climb this bush—it would break, wouldn't it?"

"Very likely. It's delicate. I don't think you really ought to taste that fruit, anyway," the angel remarked. "Don't you think it's a good idea to stop now while you're enjoying vourself thoroughly?"

"I want that fruit," David said obstinately. "What is it? It's burning, isn't it?"

"Yes," said the angel. "And it's rather like persimmons. It may pucker your mouth. Some people love it and others decide that it spoils the taste of everything else."

"Well, how can I reach it?" David asked.

The angel sighed and tossed away his satisfaction-berry which was only about half nibbled away.

"If you must have it," he said. And he raised his wings and flew up from the ground. "It may spoil everything, I warn you."

The angel flew to the top of the bush and broke off the red round burning fruit. He flew down again and handed the smok-

ing thing to David. And David was so curious to know what the taste was that he bit in immediately, in spite of the heat of the fruit. No sooner had he tasted it than he was sorry. It did pucker his mouth, and all at once he looked at the glittering bush and decided he could find nothing on it that he wanted. And one taste of that burning fruit was enough. David dropped it to the ground and sat down. And his thoughts grew hazy and far away. He found himself wishing for a thousand things—all at once. But he didn't know what they were. But whatever they were they were far away, somewhere else.

"You see," said the angel, "you have eaten the dream-fruit. You will only be satisfied with dreams now."

And David stared drowsily at the great fountains. They looked more beautiful than ever. The silver light was turning to gold. Slowly the forest became brighter and brighter. Somewhere far above, singing began. It was a strange clear singing. David looked up and saw high in the air huge glass birds darting in and out among the fountains.

The angel explained that those were the crystal eagles that lived in the Forest of Fountains. Their feathers were made of prisms so that as they turned in the air the light on their wings blazed and dazzled with all the colors of the rainbow.

"They seem to have something in their beaks," David said.

"Something even brighter than their feathers. What is it?"

"Star-splinters," the angel answered. "When the eagles get hungry they fly up and peck at the stars."

David thought that the crystal eagles up there among the fountain-trees were the most beautiful things he had ever seen. As they flew, now and then they would sing—short clear songs.

"When they have eaten the star-splinters they sing like that," the angel explained. Then he looked almost frightened. "Listen!" he exclaimed, and pointed his spear in the air.

At first David could hear nothing. Then a stomping sound came to his ears. It was slow—like the step of an elephant, and it grew heavier and heavier as it approached. It jarred the fountains till their trunks shook. The Willing Swine who had been dozing at David's side began to grunt anxiously, nosing at David's elbow as if he wanted to be taken up and carried away. The crystal eagles disappeared in the air.

STOMP! STOMP! STOMP! STOMP! The noise came nearer, and the earth shook. The fountains wobbled dangerously.

"As I feared!" the angel said in a whisper. "It's a Heavy-footer, a kind of giant. They stray in here sometimes. They get lost—without knowing it. We are in danger. Come! Seize my coat and hang on!" The angel lifted his wings.

"And what about the pig?" David asked.

"Come, come—no time to lose. Quick!" The angel was half off the ground, fanning his wings.

THUMP!—THUMP!—THUMP!—THUMP!

The giant tread sounded.

"But shouldn't we save the pig?" David stooped and tried to raise the pig, but he had forgotten how small he was, and even the little pig was too heavy for him now.

THUMP! THUMP!

"Look out! The foot—!" The angel jerked David to one side.

Through two fountains a huge shoe appeared. It seemed to David an ordinary shoe except for its tremendous size. He saw that it had a rubber heel and above that there was the cuff of an enormous trouser.

"Look out for the fountains! Duck—quick!" The angel cried.

And as the shoe came down the fountains on either side shook, wobbled and broke.

"Too late!" shouted the angel. "Hold your breath!"

There was a great roar and a crashing noise all through the forest. One after another the fountains came dropping to earth. A torrent of water fell heavily on David's head. He thought surely he was drowning. He gasped and gurgled. But he swooped down quickly and with a great effort of strength he seized the pig, lifting it above the rushing waters on the ground. As he did this he shot

up into the air. All at once he was big again. His head was above the water, but he was drenched all over, and a flood was running round his ankles. He was amazed to find that the Willing Swine which he was holding was only the size of a very small toy pig now, but he was even more astonished to see what else was happening.

By this time all the water had flowed away, disappeared mysteriously, and the forest was quite gone. A wide empty field was there instead. About ten feet from David a man was standing. He seemed just an ordinary man. He was plainly dressed, baldheaded, rather fat in the paunch, and he smoked a big cigar and wore black-rimmed spectacles. Through his glasses he was squinting at something in one hand. David saw what it was—a shining little piece of steel, about the size of a knitting needle. In his efforts to save David the angel had evidently dropped his spear. And this man had picked it up. The angel quickly saw what had happened, and David noticed that there was a very angry frown on the angel's face.

The angel flew up to David's ear and whispered: "Save yourself. Meet me at the Star of the Insects. I'll punish this Heavyfooter. He's ruined the Forest of Fountains with his clumsy feet. Go ahead. Wait for me at the New Star."

"What about you?" David asked. "Aren't you afraid of Heavy-footers?"

"I'm all right," the angel replied. "This one sees me but he doesn't believe in me. I can always escape from any place as long as some person there sees me. If everybody refuses to see me—I'm in real trouble. I lose my wings, then, I don't exist. This fellow wouldn't believe in me even if I pulled his moustache off from under his nose. But I know he sees me—though he pretends he doesn't. I'll make him pay for the damage he's done here. And I'm certainly not going to let him keep my spear. Go ahead—meet me at the New Star."

"But can't I help?" David asked. "I'll tell him to give you back your spear."

"No, that would only make things worse. He would try to put you in your place by keeping my spear for good. He's like that, I can see it. Go on—go to the New Star."

"But where is it?"

"Neither up nor down—nowhere, like everything else."

"But how will I get there?"

"Jump. And don't act superior to the insects when you get there. That would be dangerous. Remember!"

David didn't jump because he didn't know which way to jump. Instead, he stood watching the Heavy-footer squinting at

the spear, turning it over and over. It looked as if the man were deliberately trying to annoy the angel, though he gave no sign of seeing either David or the angel.

Then, like a humming bird, the angel flew up under the Heavy-footer's chin. The man glanced down at him, absently, but said nothing. Suddenly the little angel seized the man's cigar with both fists. He jerked it from the fellow's mouth and threw it spinning into the air.

The Heavy-footer jumped, but held on to the little spear. He squinted at the ground.

"Well, I'll be dingbusted!" he grunted. "Where'd that cigar go?" Then he saw it and, puffing and grunting, he stooped to pick it up. But the angel flew ahead of him and gave the cigar a push. It rolled beyond the Heavy-footer's reach. "Say!" he growled, and went after his cigar. But again the little angel flew in and pushed it away. David could not help smiling. It looked very much like the game you play with dogs: throwing a stick for the dog to chase. "What's the matter with that blooming cigar?" The Heavy-footer stood up, very red in the face, and glared at the cigar on the ground. But he took no notice of the angel standing in his armor with one foot on the cigar—looking just the way a knight in a picture looks with one foot on a dead dragon.

The Heavy-footer stooped down once more. At this the angel grabbed up the cigar and flew up into the air waving it triumphantly. He flew right up to the Heavy-footer's nose and shook the cigar there.

David was terrified to see the man open his mouth as if he were going to bite at the angel—just like a snapping dog. But suddenly he wrinkled his nose and gave a gigantic sneeze which blew the angel at least ten feet away. The angel laughed and waved the cigar again. Then he darted back and struck the man sharply on his bald-spot with the long cigar. The cigar bounced out of the angel's hands and dropped to earth.

"This has gone far enough! We'll look into this matter. What kind of a bird is this, anyway?" the Heavy-footer said. And as he spoke, a dreadful thing happened. His fat hand went up and closed suddenly around the little angel—wings and all. "Thought I didn't know you were there all the time, eh? Get frisky with your betters, will you?"

David's heart almost stopped beating as he saw the angel's face turn pale while he struggled to get out of that fat fist. It looked exactly as if the man had caught a robin and was holding it there. The little angel panted and turned his head, staring at David helplessly. This was too much. David burst into tears.

As he cried he shrank smaller and smaller. Then he realized

that he was acting in a way that made him look small and that if he didn't control himself he would disappear altogether and never be able to help his friend the angel. So he stopped crying. But he was so little now that the pig stood at his side quite large again. And close by stood the great giant Heavy-footer, and far up, in his hand, David saw the angel still a prisoner.

The man slowly unbuttoned his coat. Then—just as though he were putting away a fountain-pen—he placed the angel in his inside pocket. And with his fat fingers he buttoned his coat again and patted the pocket.

David was too horrified to move. But as he stood there gasping, something clattered to his side on the ground. He saw the angel's spear lying at his feet. He caught it up and, with a furious lunge, he jabbed it at the Heavy-footer's ankle. The giant foot went up into the air with a jump. David saw the great rubber heel coming down on his head. It brushed his hair just as he fell to one side and rolled to safety. But again the foot went up. A second later David felt a terrific kick. He shot up into space. But he hung on to the spear tightly, meaning to jab the Heavy-footer again when he landed after that kick from the great brute. But the trouble with that idea was that David never landed back there again. He found himself flying through space like a sky-

rocket, on and on. What would become of the angel? When would he get free—and where would the Heavy-footer take him?

After a time, David began to drop through space more slowly. Then he heard a low buzzing sound. It grew louder and louder. He saw a great green ball below him. As he spun nearer he knew that this was the New Star—the Star of the Insects that the angel had told him to jump to. Instead he had been kicked there. He felt himself settling like an airship to the ground. And a moment later he was lying on his stomach in what seemed to be a bed of giant clover. The blossoms towered above him. Nearby he heard loud buzzing and he realized that two bees were talking together. He listened until he was able to understand them.

"If you pay no attention to them they won't bother you," one bee was saying.

"Well, this one went right by my nose—a yellow-headed boy, I think it was," the second bee answered.

"It's too bad they can't stay where they belong. What good are they, anyway?"

David knew then that they were talking about him. But soon they changed the subject.

"There'll be a fine crop of clover this Spring," one bee said. "Look at this field, up to our knees!"

David glanced up. What size were these bees if the clover high

over his own head only reached to their knees? Undoubtedly this was a world designed for insects if they were as large as all that. And David thought of the angel's advice: "Don't act superior to the insects—that would be dangerous. Remember!"

Certainly to be stung by a six-foot bee would be no joke at all.

CHAPTER SIX

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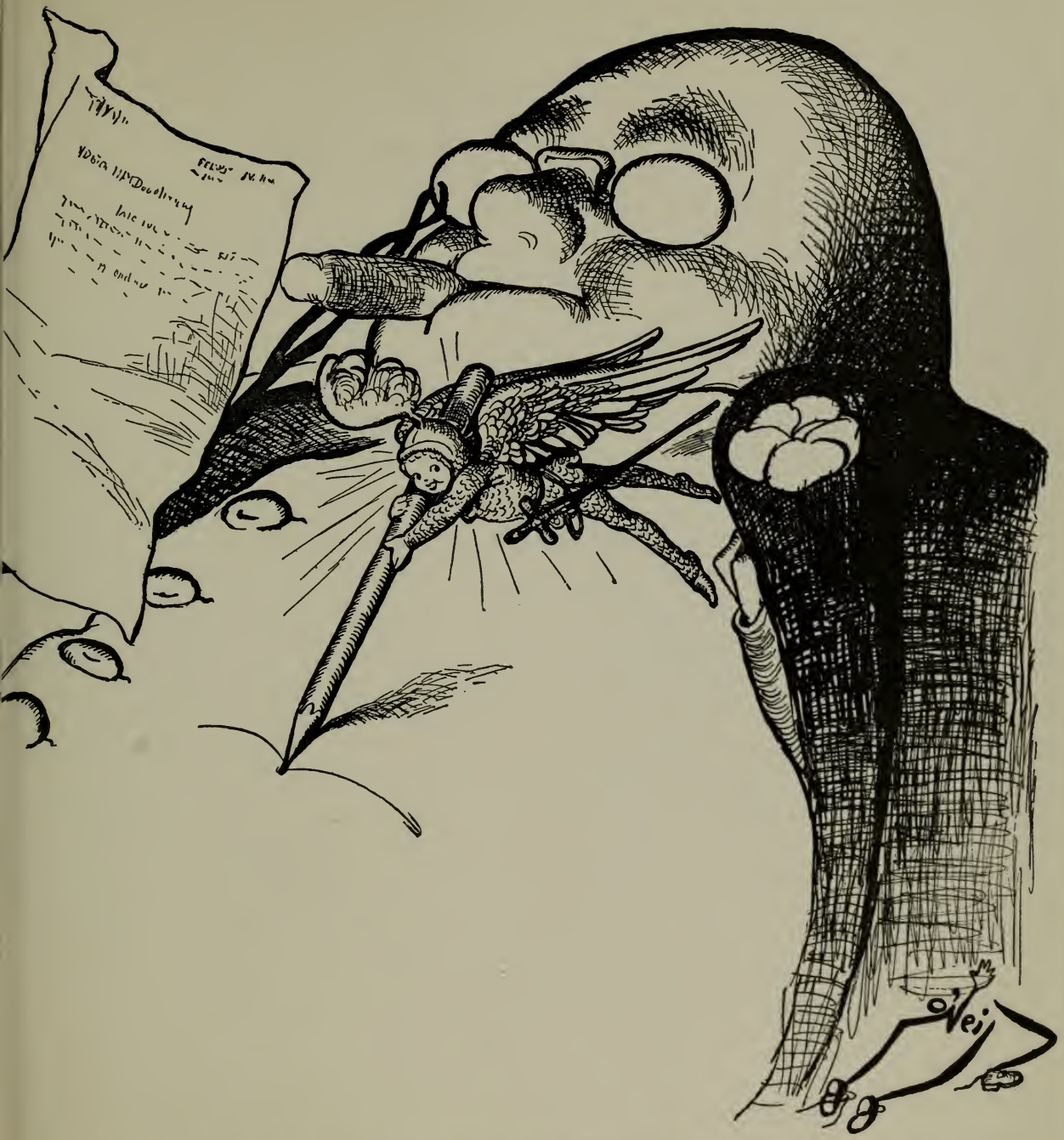
Giants at Lunch



Seizing the lead-pencil, he swung from the edge of the pocket and jumped cautiously to Mr. *Dingleberry's paunch.* Page 77

CHAPTER SIX

Giants at Lunch

In the meantime, the angel found himself in an unpleasant position. While David lay in the clover on the New Star, listening to the big bees, the angel was being carried back to Earth. He was so tightly buttoned in the Heavy-footer's pocket that he could just get his head over the edge to breathe. Even so, he was still in the dark, and his cheek rubbed closely against the fat man's vest. It was made of rough cloth that tickled the angel's skin. He was so uncomfortable he could scarcely think at all. At any rate, he knew he had little chance of escaping until the man unbuttoned his tight-fitting coat.

In the same pocket with the angel there was a lead-pencil, a long yellow one. Since he had lost his spear he thought of taking this pencil as a substitute weapon. He examined it in the gloomy pocket. The point was not very sharp, and along the pencil's side, badly chewed, there was some printing. The angel at last spelled it out: DEAL WITH SWEENEY AND KEEP THAT SMILE. He didn't understand that but he decided that he'd need some

kind of a weapon, so he made up his mind to take the pencil with him when he got free again.

There were also some papers in the pocket. A large envelope was sticking up near the angel's head. In one corner of the envelope he read: If not delivered in five days return to P. L. Dingleberry Ash-Can Company. And as the Heavy-footer jogged along, shaking all over, the papers in his pocket slid up and down. And once the angel read on one of them:

Dear Mr. Dingleberry:

We are sending you our order today for ten thousand patented ash-cans . . .

And on another sheet—a piece of pink paper smelling like carnations—the angel spelled out in big purple handwriting:

Dearest Dodo:

Thanks a million times for the lovely box of pralines . . .

But soon the angel gave up trying to amuse himself in the Heavy-footer's pocket. He realized that the man was no longer walking. They seemed to be riding, now, in some kind of machine that went very fast. The angel could hear horns honking, and many people walking and talking, every time the machine stopped for a minute. It stopped often, waiting until a loud whistle blew somewhere before it moved on again.

After some time the Heavy-footer got out of the machine and

walked a little distance. The angel could hear him saying every now and then: "Hello, Jake . . . Hello, Jim . . . Hoddo, Miss Huckins . . ." as he walked along.

A few minutes later the angel found himself being squeezed even more closely. A door slid shut with a bang and they were being shot up into the air. A voice said: "Tenth floor . . . eleventh floor . . . twelfth floor . . ." and so on, until the Heavy-footer moved out on the thirtieth floor.

Here there was a great deal of noise. Many voices chattered, and somewhere music—at least horns and drums—played loudly. The angel could hear men shout in greeting to the Heavy-footer: "Hey there, P. L.!" or "Well, Mr. Dingleberry!" And then a terrific slapping noise would sound, and the angel would get so badly shaken that his suit of armor and even his teeth would rattle. He realized after this happened a number of times that people were hitting the Heavy-footer—or Mr. Dingleberry, as he seemed to be named—on the back when they saw him. The angel hoped that it was hurting Mr. Dingleberry as much as he deserved. But Mr. Dingleberry didn't seem to mind being hit on the back. He would simply say: "Well, well, well . . . High, Ed. Well, well, well . . . Lo, Bob." And the angel wondered what it all meant.

In a little while things quieted down. Only one person spoke at a time, making long speeches. But there was a noise of clattering

and clinking while the speeches were made. The angel began to grow very curious, besides growing more and more uncomfortable. He wanted very much to see what was going on around him, why so many people were making speeches. All the speeches ended something like this: "And let us all give three cheers for our friend and helper, Mr. P. L. Dingleberry, who has done more for the ash-can business than any man in this part of the country!" Then there would be loud cheering and much hand-clapping and people would sing: "For he's a jolly good fellow, he's a jolly good fellow!"

It seemed as if Mr. Dingleberry had entirely forgotten about the angel in his pocket. So the angel hit on an idea. He carefully turned the lead-pencil up and began sticking the point through Mr. Dingleberry's coat. He worked quite a good peek-hole in the cloth. Then he put one eye there and looked through. He saw a great room all crowded with men sitting at tables. Mr. Dingleberry was at the middle of a very long table, and there were flags and flowers all around. Everyone was eating—when they weren't called on to make speeches.

The angel supposed it was a birthday party. But he was surprised to hear the compliments that people were paying Mr. Dingleberry, even if it was his birthday. The people evidently approved of the man.

After a while Mr. Dingleberry stood up and made a speech

himself. As he spoke, his chest shook so that the angel had pins and needles all over his body from the vibration. Finally Mr. Dingleberry said:

"I'm all choked up with emotion. I can't say nothing more. Instead, let me show you something, which, I'm sure, will make you all as happy as it has made me today."

Then, to the angel's terror, Mr. Dingleberry unbuttoned his coat. A fat hand came inside and fumbled about. The angel had time to slide way down to the bottom of the pocket. Was Mr. Dingleberry looking for him? The angel held his breath. But, suddenly, he felt some letters in the pocket being pulled out. And a second later Mr. Dingleberry was unfolding a sheet of paper while everyone waited. Then Mr. Dingleberry read, loudly:

"Dear Mr. Dingleberry:

We are sending you our order today for ten thousand patented ash-cans. There are no ash-cans in the world as good as yours. There is no man who understands the importance of the ash-can in the modern home so thoroughly as you . . ."

Mr. Dingleberry read on until there were deafening cheers.

In that instant the angel saw his chance. Seizing the lead-pencil, he swung from the edge of the pocket and jumped cautiously to Mr. Dingleberry's paunch. Mr. Dingleberry was too busy bowing to notice the angel. But, unfortunately, just as the

angel started to hop under the table to the floor, Mr. Dingleberry leaned forward to take a glass of water, and that way, the angel was squeezed so tightly against the table-edge that to save his back from being broken he had to climb out onto the table-cloth.

Naturally he expected his appearance there to create a sensation. He didn't know what the results would be. But a minute later he realized that the worst had happened. He was standing against a big horse-shoe of flowers, squarely in the middle of the table, and yet—horrors!—not a soul there saw him!

That meant that he was in real trouble. He could do nothing to escape where no one at all saw him. His wings were no use to him then. What was he to do? He rushed forward and kicked Mr. Dingleberry squarely in the middle button of his vest. But the man glanced down and brushed some crumbs away there. Mr. Dingleberry could no longer see the little angel.

There was nothing to do then but to run up and down the long table, hoping that someone there might notice him. In dashing about in his panic, the angel upset several glasses of water, but no one seemed to wonder at that. He pinched and tickled the hands and elbows on the table, but people merely scratched and went on eating and talking. He used the lead-pencil to push food off dishes—hoping that way to attract attention. But though the

men seemed surprised to see a lead-pencil falling into their plates, they only pushed it aside.

The angel was in a frenzy. How could he escape this place? He was sick of it; he wanted to find his horse and he had promised David that he would meet him on the Star of the Insects. The angel jabbed his pencil into a large grape-fruit. It squirted in three directions. But those who got the juice in their faces merely laughed and wiped it away.

At the far end of the table the angel sat down on a piece of cheese to think. The man who had been nibbling that piece of cheese stood up to tell a joke. Next to that man, the angel noticed a young man who was not paying attention to the joke. Instead, he was staring at the table-cloth, frowning, and drawing pictures with a fork. Something in the young man's face cheered the angel up, so he got up from the piece of cheese and walked toward the fork. The young man was drawing an angel—which was quite a coincidence. But suddenly the fork stopped moving.

"Good Lord!" the young man said.

The angel knew he was saved. He had been seen at last. The young man looked flabbergasted.

"Thank you for seeing me," the angel said.

Then the young man smiled.

"You draw well," the angel remarked, glancing at the lines the fork had made.

"Thank *you*," the man said.

"You've done me a great service," the angel said. "What can I do for you?"

"What *could* you do? What can anybody do in a stupid place like this—but just sit and be bored to death?" the young man said glumly.

"How about taking this pencil? It's only a makeshift spear for me. Take it," the angel urged. "Draw things if you must stay in this dreadful place. At least you can amuse yourself, then."

"You're very thoughtful," the young man said, accepting the pencil.

"Not at all, merely grateful for being noticed here," the angel answered. "Now I can go. I hope you too can escape. Good-bye."

"Thank you, I hope so, too. But I advise you to hurry before you're seen by some of these other fellows. If you're caught they'll surely give you a job."

The young man looked quite depressed as the little angel flew up and darted along the table. Anxious as he was to escape, the angel could not resist lingering long enough to do one mischievous thing. He flew under the table at Mr. Dingleberry's chair. Mr. Dingleberry was still standing up, bowing. And just as he went to

sit down the angel pushed with all his might at one leg of the chair. It slid away. There was a loud scuffling bump. Mr. Dingleberry hit the floor with a great grunt. Everyone rushed to pick him up. The angel flew, smiling, toward an open window. He looked back in time to see Mr. Dingleberry, very red in the face, fumbling at his inside pocket. To hide his embarrassment at having fallen down so foolishly, Mr. Dingleberry was talking rapidly.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he was saying. "I have discovered something which I am sure will interest you. It is something new and very unusual for our advertising. I have a scheme for this queer-looking little fellow that will help us to sell our ash-cans. . . ."

Here Mr. Dingleberry fished in his pocket. Then a funny look came over his face.

"Gone! By heck, I've lost him!"

The angel laughed out loud then and flew through the open window. Far below him he saw the city with its millions of people looking like ants in the streets. Then he thought of David, and he hoped he had had the good sense not to brag to the insects because he was a boy instead of an ant or a bee.

The angel flew rapidly across the country. He wanted his horse badly, and he must hurry to see how David was getting on.

CHAPTER SEVEN

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The Way of All Grasshoppers

"I am the last of the grasshoppers on this world!" Page 90

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Way of All Grasshoppers

THE time during which the angel was in difficulties had passed in less time than it takes to snap your fingers on the Star of the Insects, and David was still lying in the giant clover field, hoping the bees would not find him there. And it happened that they didn't. They went about their business. David found later that bees were always busy. On that world it was a crime not to work all the time. But David didn't know this yet.

When the bees went away he stood up and looked about but he could see nothing but the clover stalks. It was exactly like being lost in a very dense woods. Far above him the blossoms tangled together and they were so sweet he could hardly breathe. He began to search for a way out. He walked a long time before he came to the edge of the great clover field. And then he hid behind a clump and peeked out at the new strange world.

In the distance he saw what he knew must be a city of some sort. But what kind of creatures had built it? There were great mounds, very regular, all built in rows, and at the foot of the

mounds he thought he saw many creatures hurrying back and forth. But what were those creatures? David, besides being curious, now felt hungry. The strange meal from the feast-bush had not been satisfactory so far as really feeding went. He decided to walk to that distant city and ask for a piece of bread there. And in a world of bees it oughtn't be hard to find some honey for the bread. He would ask for honey and bread.

He started off, crossing a wide flat plain, but he had not gone far, when he found himself in a predicament. The plain did not seem to be made of solid earth at all. Instead, it was sand—very fine sand that sank deeply under every step. So David was all tired out when he had walked a very short distance.

But not far away he saw a long row of white stones. He decided to drag his feet until he could sit down on one of those stones. He was afraid that if he sat down in the sand he might fall asleep and sink out of sight. Finally, with a great effort, he reached the first stone and sat down.

Then David noticed something in the distance leaping into the sky and dropping to the ground again. It grew larger and larger as it approached with those great jumps. He soon discovered to his amazement that this was an enormous grasshopper, much larger than David, himself. It reached him with a last tired hop.

At first David thought he'd better try to run, but he quickly

saw that the grasshopper was more tired than he was, and that it could scarcely move when it reached the stone where David sat. It caught its breath at last and began to speak in a very sad doleful voice.

"It seems to me," it said, "that this spot, at least, should be sacred. Couldn't you sit somewhere else?"

David saw that he had nothing to fear from this very humble creature even though it seemed monstrously large for a grasshopper.

"Why, not around here," David answered. "I'm afraid this sand would bury me if I sat down in it."

"Ah, yes!" the weary grasshopper replied. "This dreary desert! How would you like to live in it—all the rest of your days?"

"Not at all," David said. "But nobody does."

"I do!" the grasshopper said with an injured expression. "I'm nobody in this world, it's true. Oh, they have been cruel, cruel to us!"

"Cruel? Who?" David asked, as he saw two big tears drop from the grasshopper's eyes and disappear at once in the dry sand.

"Our enemies—there!" The grasshopper lifted a tired foreleg, pointing toward the city of mounds. "It was brutal of them to bring us to this New Star of theirs—just to make an example of us!"

"I'm afraid I don't follow you," David said.

The grasshopper looked at him a long time. "How did you get to this terrible place?" it asked.

"I just jumped," he answered.

"Jumped? Jumping is the greatest pleasure in life!" the grasshopper exclaimed in astonishment. "But would you deliberately jump into a life of hard labor—with your eyes open?"

"I guess I landed here by accident," David replied. "Is it so unpleasant here?"

"*Unpleasant!*" The grasshopper could not speak for a minute. The tears flowed down its face, disappearing instantly in the sand. "See what they have done to us. Look at this!" The grasshopper pointed to the long row of white stones. There must have been a thousand of them, stretching out in that row.

"What are these stones for?" David asked.

"Yes, you might ask that—since you've sat down on one as if it were nothing at all. What are they for? They're eternal monuments to our disgrace and defeat. They're tombstones."

"Tombstones?" David stood up and stared at the stone. There did seem to be some dim carving on it.

"I am the last of the grasshoppers on this world!" the creature said tragically. "These are my brave brothers—dead! Gone forever—never to hop again! I shall soon join them, I hope!"

"Oh, come!" David said, trying to cheer the grasshopper. "Life isn't so bad. Think of all the fun you can have."

"*Fun!* Just try to have fun in this world controlled by those tyrants!" Again the grasshopper pointed toward the city. "Don't mention pleasure in their hearing. You will be put to death. They have no mercy. Look at me! Old and exhausted, I'm still forced to live in this desert. When those creatures claimed this world for themselves—leaving the Earth that men live on——"

David interrupted. "Why are all the bugs on Earth so anxious to leave it?"

"Bugs?" the grasshopper raised its eyebrows. "I don't understand the term. This star has been given over to the race of insects to develop. They have been coming here for some centuries now. First the bees grew tired of the way men behave. They grew sick of being mistreated by men—having their food taken away by men, and so forth. There's no need to mention all the crimes men have committed against insects. But in spite of men, we grasshoppers liked the Earth—we were content there. When the proposition of the New Star was put up to us we said we didn't care to leave Earth. A famous ancestor of ours—as you no doubt have heard—stood up at the Conference of Insects and made that immortal speech beginning: 'While there is green grass, while there is sunlight, while there is summer, on this world, we grasshoppers are

content—nay, joyful, to jump out our lives upon this Earth . . .'

"Our refusal to come to this star with other insects of the higher type created a sensation. We were ridiculed and mocked. You see, there was a chance to get away from men—our greatest enemy—and from the world they had made such a botch of running. Still, we stuck to our guns and refused to leave."

"But you *did* leave!" David said. "Here you are."

"Not of our own accord. That's where those cruel creatures, the ants, come in. As you know, the ants hate us grasshoppers most—because they believe in work and we believe in play. Well, when the move to this new star was made, the ants put a terrible plot to work. This graveyard is the result of that plot. These are the graves of martyrs—grasshoppers that died for a good cause." The grasshopper wept some more before continuing.

"One thousand noble upstanding young grasshoppers were surrounded one day when they were dozing in a meadow on Earth. An army of ants—millions of them—took us by surprise and overpowered us. Then, by the mysterious means that the ants know, we were brought here, a thousand captured grasshoppers. And why do you suppose that was done?"

"I can't imagine," David murmured.

"The ants meant us to be an example to all the insects on this star! We were turned out in this desert—given barely enough food

to keep us alive—and millions of young ants were brought once a year to stare at us. The ants have a holiday they call Grasshopper Thursday. It comes once a year, and, of course, it's not a real holiday; they only stop work long enough to come out here and tell their children terrible tales about us unfortunate grasshoppers —just to frighten the young ants into working. 'You see,' the ants say on Grasshopper Thursday, 'this is the useless grasshopper who cares only for pleasure. And if you care for pleasure and try to enjoy yourself in this world—you will come to the same end as these grasshoppers. You will find yourself without riches or friends, and you will die in a desert.' That's what the young ant is taught about us. The entire race on this star despises us, and we *have* all died in this desert, that is, all but me. And I can't last much longer. There are only a few hops left in these old legs!"

David felt sorry for the poor creature. "I apologize for sitting on the tombstone," he said. And he bent down to read the carving.

Here lies a hero
  Died for pleasure,
Hopping all year. Oh
  Who could measure
The joy he found
  In jumping around,
In simply jumping around?

"I wish I could help you," David said. "But I haven't a thing to give you."

"Your sympathy is more than I expected," the grasshopper responded. "But there's no hope for me. Who could expect pity from those cruel tyrants?" The grasshopper nodded toward the distant mounds.

A thought struck David. "Is that where the ants live?" he asked.

"That's their capitol, yes. New Work is the name they have given that city."

"I have it, then!" David said. "I'll go and tell them how badly off you really are. I'll plead your case. They'll surely be generous to the last grasshopper in the world!"

"You don't know ants as I do!" The grasshopper shook its head. "I advise you to go home. Stay away from that place!"

"Nonsense! Why should I be afraid of ants?" David said. "I've watched them in the garden and in the cracks of the stone steps. They didn't look so smart to me! I'll talk to them, all right, I'll tell them a thing or two!"

"Go slow! Be careful!" the grasshopper cried. But David was already on his way toward New Work, the city of the ants. As he drew near, he was surprised to see how high and huge the ant-hills

were. He had forgotten again that he was not his natural size. And, evidently, the ants were giants here—just as the bees were. David saw the city gates not far off and he began to think about how you could show politeness to an ant.

CHAPTER EIGHT

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A Fox in a Fix

The angel understood then. His horse, bright brown, almost red, was taking the fox's place while the fox rested in the fence. Page 104

CHAPTER EIGHT

A Fox in a Fix

All this time the angel was flying over the country. He had decided that on his way back to David he would fly rather low over towns and counties and keep an eye out for his horse. He would have been able to make ten times as much time on Thunderstruck, for Thunderstruck seemed merely to wish himself through space. He traveled like a shooting star wherever he went. And the angel needed him badly now, since he must fly all the way to the New Star. Unlike David, the angel could not get there by simply jumping, because he had been born with wings and he was obliged to use them.

Flying over wheat-fields and rivers and churches and skyscrapers, forests and mountains, the angel peered at the land closely. But Thunderstruck was not to be seen. Of course he was a very small creature, anyway—about the size of a small terrier—and that made it difficult to find him. But the angel's eyes were keen.

At last, however, he decided to give up the search and hurry to

David, knowing that Thunderstruck would turn up eventually. The angel was just passing through the top of an apple-tree all in bloom when he saw two creatures sitting on one of the flowery branches. He recognized Three and Four o'clock. Four o'clock was a very pretty young woman, and she and Three made a nice picture, leaning back in an angle of the tree-trunk with their hands clasped under their heads. (They were just a bit larger than the angel himself.) They stared up through the branches, smiling at some swallows who flew, cutting figure-eights in the air for their amusement. But when the two hours recognized the angel they looked rather guilty.

"We couldn't resist idling here for a moment. It's such a marvelous day. And these apple-blossoms smell so nice. Do take a whiff of them."

"I haven't time," the angel said. "But I'm glad I found you loafing here. I followed you through the mole's burrow." He turned to Three. "I thought maybe you'd seen my horse."

Four o'clock spoke up, fixing her bright yellow hair at the same time. "Why, I saw him—just a little while ago—about ten miles over that way." She pointed. "And he seemed to me to be acting most peculiarly—running round a field in circles. He looked as if he might drop from exhaustion any minute."

"Why didn't you ask him if he needed help?" Three o'clock enquired. "That's your business, you know."

"Why—" Four looked rather annoyed. "I had this engagement with you in the apple-tree."

"Nonsense!" Three exclaimed, looking guilty again.

"What do you mean—nonsense? You certainly don't mean to say that I *pursued* you here?" she said testily. "It strikes me you're rather egotistical."

But the angel stayed to hear no more. He was out of the apple-tree on his way. Over stone fences and hedges he flew, about ten feet above the ground, sometimes dropping lower to shake a bush or peek behind boulders. What was Thunderstruck up to, he wondered.

Not far away he heard a loud clear horn on the soft air. Then he heard many dogs yelping and barking. He flew quickly in that direction. But he soon realized that he must be careful.

Down below many people dressed in bright pink coats were galloping across the meadows on horseback. And ahead of the riders a band of hounds ran sniffing at the earth. Now and then one of the riders raised a horn and blew loudly, and everyone rode after him, leaping fences and brooks to follow.

What were they chasing? The angel, keeping safely to one side, could not make out at first. Then he saw it: a small brown

fox tearing frantically in front of the hounds. The fox dashed now and then to hide behind a rock, then out again, as the dogs drew nearer.

The angel saw that the fox was tired and could not last long. The little red flame of his tail wavered over another field and he crawled under some loose stones in a fence. The hounds loped swiftly and began to yelp, sniffing at the fence. It looked as if it were the end of the fox. But no! What was that that suddenly dashed out from the stones and began to run round and round in the meadow?

The dogs turned and stared. Then they gave chase again, barking angrily. The riders came galloping one after another. Near the center of this field there was a tree, and the angel lit in its branches and looked out at what was going on. And what was going on was strange enough. There in front of the hounds was Thunderstruck, running madly.

The angel understood then. His horse, bright brown, almost red, was taking the fox's place while the fox rested in the fence. And evidently this had been going on for some time, because the angel overheard the rider with the horn saying:

"They're at it again—playing ring-around-a-rosie! That's the queerest-looking fox I've ever hunted, and what's more, it doesn't behave as a fox *should* behave. We've followed that cussed thing

through six counties, and look at it—teasing those hounds until they're half crazy. That fox is Old Nick's pet, if you ask me!" And the man blew his horn again, and the riders streamed out into the field after the dogs.

But the angel could see that Thunderstruck was tired. The horse had evidently been running just as a fox runs instead of shooting through space in the way that never tired him. And Thunderstruck was not such a comfortable distance ahead of those hounds. The angel thought a minute, then flew rapidly out and hovered over the field. He called out:

"Don't stop! Don't look up! But aren't you tired? Aren't you in danger, there?"

The little horse recognized its master's voice at once. And still running to keep clear of the dogs, Thunderstruck answered: "Can't help it—Must help the poor fox—Hasn't had a fair chance —Running all day to save its neck."

"But how about you?" the angel called down, flying swiftly.

"Never mind—Fox has some little ones—hidden way back."

"What are you going to do?" the angel called.

"Draw off these dogs," Thunderstruck answered. "Keep on running till fox can escape——"

But just then a terrible thing happened. Before you could quite see it all, Thunderstruck had slipped. He wasn't used to rocky

fields. And in a flash the first two dogs were on him with horrible growls.

"Hey, there!" the man with the horn shouted. "Off that fox, you beasts!" But he was too far away. And, besides, the dogs knew well enough that this was no fox that had stumbled.

The angel's heart turned upside down inside him as he saw that heap of snarling hounds in the field. He flashed down into the very midst of it. He spun his wings, beating at the eyes of the first two dogs. Then as they shrank back he fanned his wings in their faces until they began to snap at him furiously. And in that time Thunderstruck had a chance to get to his feet and dash forward again.

The angel saw the rest of the pack of hounds running toward him. He whirred up into the air just as they reached him and shouted to Thunderstruck: "Home, Thunderstruck, home!"

But the horse dashed on and the dogs, seeing they could not capture this strange shining bird over their heads, gave chase again to Thunderstruck.

The angel flew up to another tree just as the riders leapt over the fence where the fox was hiding. And one rider called to another: "Did you see what it was the dogs worried out of the field here?"

"Why, only the fox. They almost had it," the second rider answered.

"No," said the first rider. "It was a bird of some kind—brighter than any bird *I* ever saw in my life!"

The second rider's laughter floated back on the soft April air. "You're seeing things, old man!"

"Well," shouted the other, "there s something funny about this whole blooming fox hunt. Why can't we run that fox to earth?"

When the last rider had gone over the fence, the angel saw a small brown nozzle come out from behind a stone and turn timidly this way and that. A minute later the fox was running—for all she was worth (for it was a vixen) in the opposite direction, away from the riders, safe from the running hounds.

The angel fluttered his wings in the tree. The vixen stopped suddenly and looked up.

"Never mind that," the angel said. "I'm no bird. You couldn't make a meal of me. Run home to your children. And now that you know how it feels to be hunted, you might let the birds alone in the future. That is, if you're grateful for your own life."

The fox looked quite guilty. Then she put her head down and shot—like a red arrow—toward the woods where, doubtless, her children were crying for her.

The angel flew on to tell Thunderstruck that his work for the fox was finished. Five minutes later in another meadow a pack of dogs were running back and forth with tongues out, sniffing in bewilderment. The horn sounded: Gone Away. And some of the hunters were wondering how it was that that fox had suddenly seemed to jump six feet in the air, after a bird, and disappear—right under their noses. Nobody could explain it.

"I told you there was something funny about that fox," a man said.

"But *was* it a fox?" a lady asked.

"Well what *could* it have been?" someone else shouted.

"You never can tell," the lady said. And they all laughed and turned their horses round in the violets that were just blooming.

CHAPTER NINE

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The Danger in Feeling Superior

A long black stream of ants rushed out into the sandy desert after them. Page 123

CHAPTER NINE

The Danger in Feeling Superior

IN THE city of the ants on the New Star David had been wishing very much that his friend the angel would arrive. For David was in an extremely bothersome position.

No sooner had he reached the gates of that odd city than he had been stopped by guards and asked a number of questions: Where had he come from, how, why, etc. But most of all they wanted to know what work he was doing on their star, and David was obliged to answer, "None at all."

And when he said this he was immediately seized by a pair of huge ants, one on either side. This naturally frightened him, since the ants were much larger than he was. And they were very strange looking so highly magnified.

David protested but he was hustled through the gates and placed in a queer-looking building which was nothing more nor less than an ants' jail. It was a large heap of earth with many halls running through it, and the worst part of it was that it was quite dark inside. But, somehow, the ants could see, and after a long

time, David, too, was able to make out dimly what was about him.

He had felt something brushing against his face now and then in the darkness and at last he began to see what this was. He had been put in a cell, and now he discovered several shapes hanging to the walls of that cell. At last he made out that there were two big moths and one spider in the room with him. The spider was tied in a corner with heavy iron balls fastened on its many legs. But the moths were free, though they seemed so discouraged that they clung with folded wings to the wall.

After some time an ant came to the door and threw a handful of stuff through the bars. "Food," he said, and went away. David was hungry, but he discovered that this was a bunch of sour-grass that smarted on his tongue when he tried to chew it. So he gave up trying and sat wondering how long they were going to keep him there.

They had told him that he would be brought to court and given a chance to explain himself. He wished they would hurry up about it. He was anxious to get out of that dark room. Suppose the angel did arrive. He would probably go away, not finding David. And then how was David ever to find his way home again? He was beginning to think that home was a very pleasant place.

Finally, someone rattled the bars of the door and let David out, and at the same time the spider was untied, gagged, and led

out. The moths, too, were seized, and David and the three prisoners were taken down a long hall and led into a great room. This room was lighted, and soon David was able to discover where the light came from.

In a box at one side there were twelve large bugs sitting in two rows. And every now and then, as the trials progressed (for there was no doubt that this was the ants' courtroom) the twelve bugs would light up glowingly. Whenever this happened the judge, sitting in a higher box, would lean down and look closely into the prisoner's face, asking questions and watching the prisoner's expressions.

The first prisoner brought to trial was the spider. The chains were left on his feet but the gag was taken from his mouth. He was accused of murder. In the first place, the judge said, spiders had no business on the star. And he wanted to know how this particular spider had got there.

But the spider refused to speak at all. He stood all hunched up, looking very evil with his large yellow eyes. The judge made short work of him. It seemed that the spider had been caught crouching in a dark corner of the ants' city. He had spun a web across the street there. And when that web had caught a number of ant-citizens the spider would rush out and devour them.

"You are one of the worst criminals in the history of our

civilization," the judge said. "And since, plainly, you cannot defend yourself, I will pronounce sentence on you. Death!"

And everyone in the courtroom applauded.

"Death by crushing," the judge said. And the gag was put round the spider's mouth once more and he was led away, dragging his chains.

Next, the moths were tried. They stood up together, and David thought they looked very beautiful among all the ugly ants. One moth was silver with blue circles on its wings, the other was red and gold. They seemed very frightened.

The moths were accused of idleness, but also of being thieves. It seemed that they had been driven from the bees' land where they had been living on some of the treasured flowers. So they had come to the ants' capitol, since they were too flighty to work for themselves. The poor moths could not deny the charges and David felt sorry for them.

"We didn't want to come here," one of them said. "But we saw your star shining—and we just couldn't stay away from such a bright light."

And then something curious happened. The firefly jury lit up all at once, and both moths flashed up their wings and flew straight at the jury box.

The judge pounded on his desk and everyone shouted. But the

moths continued beating their wings in the faces of the lightning-bugs. Naturally the jurors didn't like it. In fact it was dangerous for them, and many of them fell over backward and lay glowing and kicking on their backs.

"Put out your lights!" the judge shouted. And when the last firefly obeyed, the moths floated down to the floor again.

"How dare you!" the judge demanded fiercely.

"Dare what?" the moths asked.

"You have tried to tamper with our jury!"

"Why no!" one moth said. "They were so bright and——"

"We love bright things," the other poor foolish moth added. "When they lit up that way we just couldn't stay away from them!"

"You are guilty of contempt of court!" the judge shouted.

"You don't understand, your honor—" one moth began, but the judge was too furious to listen.

"Silence!" he said. And then he asked the jury for their verdict.

They sentenced the moths to hard labor. And the poor creatures were taken away to drag dirt from the earth for the ants. And David saw an ant beating the silver dust off one moth's wing as it disappeared through a dark door.

Now David realized that the ants' court was not a very gentle

one. He was very anxious when someone called out: "The Court of the Ants against the Human Being!" And the guards pulled him up before the judge.

"Ah!" said the judge. "So we are face to face at last!" And he leaned down and wriggled his feelers unpleasantly in David's face. "Have you come here, thinking you could spy on us and then go back to your own world and lead another attack on our race?"

"Why, not at all!" David answered.

"But you intended to return to your own world?"

"Naturally," David said.

"And you will tell men that there is a world where insects are the rulers."

"Yes, I suppose I would mention that," David said.

"And you Human Beings would come here and try to destroy us just as they have tried to destroy us on the Earth. We have been given this world for ourselves because we have worked hard on that other one of yours. We ants, and the bees, have worked harder there than you Human Beings. And if it weren't that we were so small down there, we would be the rulers of your world too. But here we do rule! You shall not go back and betray us!" the judge said, and all the many ants in the big room cried out: "No! Don't let him go back!"

David thought a while. Then he said: "Would you treat me the way you have treated the grasshoppers?"

"That depends," the judge answered. "Why are you here?"

"I don't know," David replied.

"Very strange. How did you get here?"

"I jumped."

"Very suspicious. What have you been doing here?"

"Just looking around."

"For shame! Idleness!" said the judge. And all the court-room shouted, "Shame!"

"What work *can* you do?" the judge demanded.

"Well, I can draw pictures—and make things with a knife and a stick of wood or with tacks and a hammer——"

"I said work," the judge cut in.

David swallowed hard. He was worried now.

"What work did you do on Earth?" he was asked.

"I went to school."

"To learn what?"

"Reading, spelling, history——"

"In your opinion," the judge interrupted, "who are the ten greatest ants in history?"

"*Ants?*" David echoed.

"You see, you know nothing of real history!" the judge said.

"Well, you tell me what year Columbus discovered America," David said sharply. "Who won the battle of Waterloo? Give the name of the greatest queen of England."

"Don't be impudent!" the judge said. And all the fireflies flared excitedly.

"Well, you don't know much history yourself," David replied.

"We're wasting time! Unless you can be useful here—and I don't see how you possibly can be—we shall have to put you away some place, as we have done with the useless grasshoppers."

"That reminds me," David said. "I came here in the first place to tell you what I think of the way you've treated the grasshoppers."

"We are not interested in your opinion," the judge said.

"Well, after all," David went on, "that poor old grasshopper out there is a human being just like the rest of us——"

"What!" "How dare you?" "Insult!" Cries came from all round. "We aren't Human Beings, thank you!" "Throw him out!" "Down with Human Beings!" The fireflies all but exploded they glittered so.

"A slip of the tongue," David yelled above the racket. "I forgot where I was."

"No apologies accepted!" someone shouted.

This seemed very unfair to David. "I always heard that ants

were supposed to be intelligent," he said. "You don't seem very reasonable bugs to me——"

"*What? What* did you call us?"

"Bugs," David replied.

"We are insects, Sir!" the judge said furiously.

"Well, where I come from they call you bugs. In our kitchen one day a man went round with a can sprinkling the cracks under the sink——"

"What has that to do with anything?" the judge demanded.

"Well, there were water-bugs under the sink," David said.

"Well, what of it?"

"Well, all of a sudden the man said to Elsie, our cook, 'I see you have ants in here, too. And if there's any bug harder to kill than those nasty little ants I'd like to know——' "

But David never finished that speech. The entire jury box went up into the air and flew about while the ants made a rush at David from all sides. He was suddenly overpowered and thrown to the floor. He covered his face and waited in terror while a voice cried, "Death!" then another voice, and another: "Death! Death to all humans!" "Sting him to death!" "Show him no mercy!" And it seemed as if a thousand hairy hands were jerking him in all directions.

But just as David decided that his end was near a rumbling

noise began overhead. The ants let go of him and listened, looking at one another, while David lay speechless on the floor.

The rumbling grew louder, louder, louder. Then, suddenly: CRASH! Something fell through the ceiling with a shattering bump, and all the ants darted for the doors and disappeared.

David uncovered his eyes and looked up. Straight overhead he saw a hole through which the blue sky showed brightly. And—was it possible? Was that the brave little angel settling down to the edge of that opening above? Yes! David's heart gave a thankful jump. There, on a beautiful little brown horse, sat the angel, staring down through the hole in the ant-hill. "David! David!" his little bell-like voice called. And David had never been gladder to see anyone in his life.

"You have saved my life," he said, jumping to his feet. "But how have you done it?"

"That was a thunderbolt we called for, to strike this place," the angel said. "The last grasshopper told us you were in this city. So to find you we have broken down half the city. Oh, David, what did you do to get yourself into this prison?"

Then David remembered the angel's warning. "I guess I acted superior," he said.

"Well, come! You are still in great danger. The ants will have

their army on us in no time. And there are millions in that army. We must fly!"

At that, the angel spoke to his horse and Thunderstruck bounded down through the opening. David leapt up behind the angel, and with a great vaulting bound they were off through the hole into space. And it was just in time. As they shot into the air over the ruined city of the ants, a long black stream of ants rushed out into the sandy desert after them—a great army that looked like a dark river. But David was safe—thanks to the wonderful little horse. They went across the heavens like a bullet. And David was very glad to be out in the sweet light air once more.

On and on they went, and the sky grew bluer and bluer, till, at last, a wide flat island flashed into view.

"We'll rest here a minute," the angel said. "I want to get something here."

And Thunderstruck dropped on to the curious island. It was shaped quite like a soup plate, but it was at least a mile across. It seemed to be made of ice. And on it—queer as it must sound—a great many little men, dwarves or gnomes, were busily engaged at some labor.

"Where on earth are we now?" David asked, slipping to the icy ground from Thunderstruck's back.

"We're not on earth at all, yet," the angel answered. "This is the Weather-dish. I'll explain it to you. Then you must hurry home, I notice you haven't my spear with you."

David had forgotten all about it. Undoubtedly it was still lying in that clover field of the bees, where it had dropped when David landed on the New Star. He apologized to the angel.

"Well, it does make a difference," the angel said. "But that's why we're stopping here. They'll be able to fix me up somehow."

CHAPTER TEN

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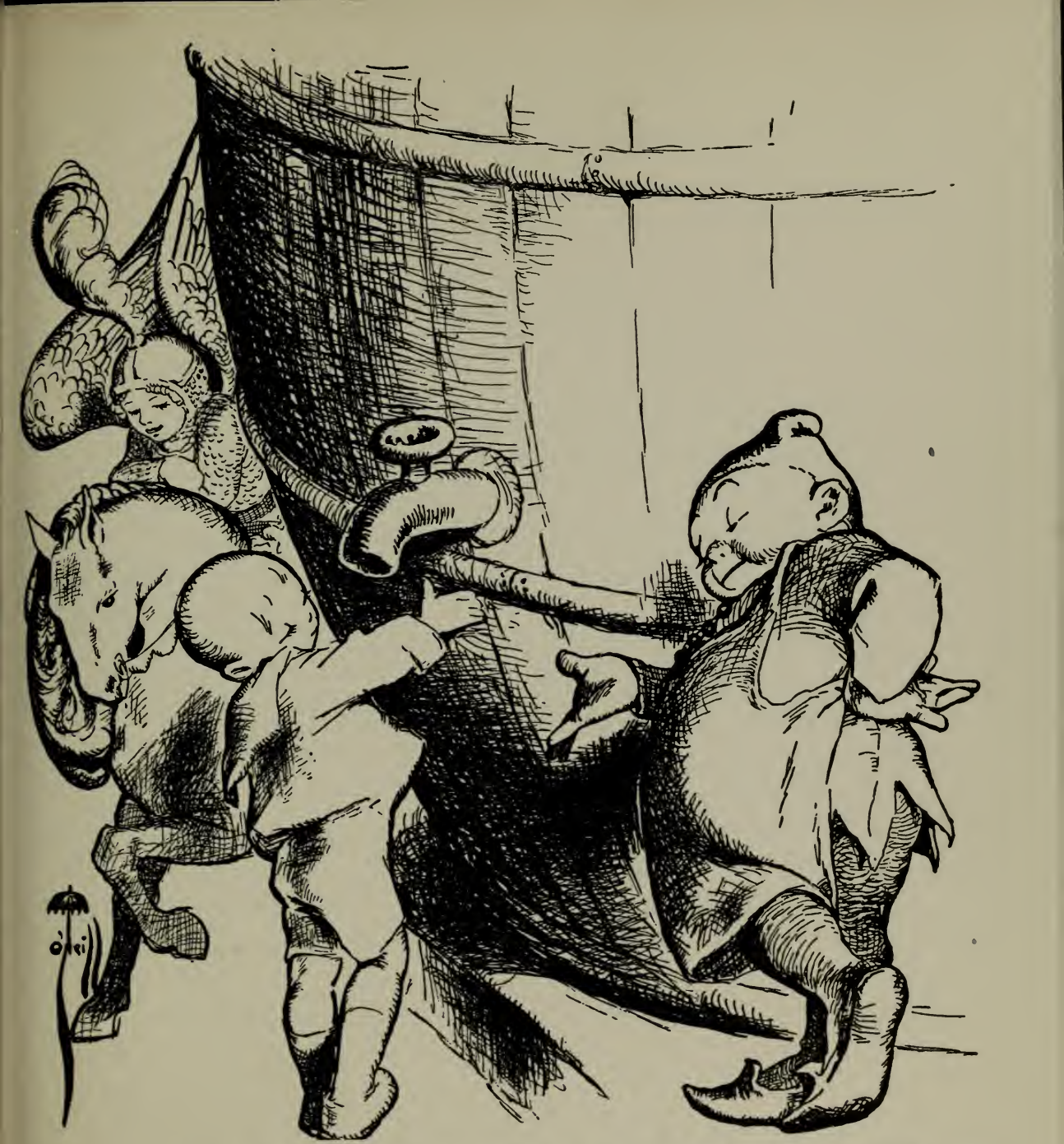
The Weather-dish



"Do you mean to say that this is really a barrel of hail?" David asked. . . . "Yes—our best brand," the dwarf answered. Page 129

CHAPTER TEN

The Weather-dish

THE Weather-dish was something David had never imagined. On all sides there were rows of big barrels and tanks. He noticed that these objects were all labeled.

"You see," the angel said, after he had introduced David to the head Dwarf there, "these barrels and boxes hold all the different kinds of weather."

And David read the labels. One said: SNOW, another, APRIL-SHOWERS, others, SLEET, HAIL, FOG, and so on.

"Do you mean to say that this is really a barrel of hail?" David asked, tapping a big barrel.

"Yes—our best brand," the dwarf answered. "We have many grades of hail." And he went on to explain how the hail was made. For it seemed that this queer dish-island in the sky was nothing less than the weather factory. And all the gnomes there were working to manufacture the snow, rain and sleet that went into the barrels.

"Then as the orders come in, we open the barrels and tip them

over the edge here. And down there"—he pointed below to another island in space—"is the delivery department. They see that the weather is delivered where it is needed."

They walked along and saw rows of laborers standing at long tables, working with very fine tools. The little gnomes were all too busy to look up. David was fascinated by the men who cut the snow-flakes. They made them in many patterns and they looked like tiny pieces of lace and jewels.

As they approached one table a dwarf looked up at the manager.

"I say," he said, "may I speak to you, Sir?"

They stopped while the manager-dwarf listened to a complaint. The laborer had been making very fine sleet. "But I'm no good at sleet!" he said. "I'm wasting my time and yours. I think I ought to be given a chance to do the work I'm suited to."

"And what is that?" the manager asked.

"Mist. I'm the best mist-layer here, if you only knew it."

"That means you want to travel," the manager said. For, as he explained to David, mist-laying had to be done on Earth. "Well, we'll give you a try-out." He turned to David again. "Would you care to order some mist?" And David nodded, not sure just how you gave an order for weather.

"Take a half mile of our best mist down where this boy lives

and lay it." Then he took David's address. "You can let me know," he said, "if the mist is laid satisfactorily. If so, we'll keep this fellow on in that work."

"But how can I reach you?" David asked.

"Tell him," the manager said, pointing to the angel.

"By the way," the angel said, "could you let me have an icicle to take along? I've mislaid my spear, and I'd like something to carry until I've seen this boy home."

"Surely," the dwarf said.

And they went to a great box and he opened it. The manager took down a number of beautiful sharp icicles before the angel found one that suited him.

"But won't it melt?" David asked.

"Not if I stay up high enough," the angel replied.

Just then they came to a spot where a number of barrels labeled FOG were being dropped over the edge of the dish.

"Those go to London," the dwarf said. "They keep us busy in London. It seems to be quite a town for weather."

All at once there was a great commotion in one part of the factory. The manager excused himself and hurried in that direction.

"We'd better go, anyway," the angel said. And he gave a little whistle which brought Thunderstruck away from a rain-box that

was leaking a thin trickle which Thunderstruck had been lapping up.

"But look! What's happening?" David cried.

And in the air a great many white bullets began to fly back and forth.

"The strike's on in the hail department," one laborer said to another. "Come on, let's join it." And a minute later all the gnomes were running and shouting at one side of the dish.

The rain-makers, it happened, were complaining that they had been overworked and that more hail should be used. This annoyed the hail-makers. They had been grumbling for some time over their wages. So now the quarrel was on.

David and the angel ducked many large chunks of ice. But as they stood watching, something happened. So many dwarves were on one side of the weather factory that the great dish began to tip dangerously in the air. The barrels began to wobble and roll. Then the excitement grew higher. Some angry dwarves started pulling the corks out of the barrels and pushing them toward the edge. And soon it was nothing short of a riot. And snow, sleet, hail, rain and great clouds of fog, began to fall from the Weather-dish into the air.

"We seem to have called on a bad day!" the angel said.

David remarked: "I wonder what they'll think in the world when all this assorted weather hits there?"

"Fortunately it's April," the angel said, "and people expect any kind of weather on an April day."

The dish was teetering back and forth now.

"Come!" the angel said. And he caught David up to Thunderstruck's back. "You must get home!"

"But we can't go through all that terrible weather," David objected. But the truth was he was still thinking of Tomorrow's House. Surely it was somewhere about here—where all these other unlikely things were.

"Maybe you're right," the angel agreed. "We'll take a little canter on the Milky Way. It's rather nice at just this time of day."

"Is that a poem?" David asked.

"Don't be foolish," the angel said. "Everything that rhymes isn't poetry."

And they went loping along a silver path so wide and so long that David couldn't see the sides or the end of it. And the angel swung his icicle spear over his head: "For exercise—to keep in trim," he said.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

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Breckneckle the Tishmosh

David began timidly. "You are beautiful . . ." The creature raised its eyebrows and smiled foolishly . . . "And you certainly are mysterious!" "Ah!" The creature looked delighted at that. Page 141

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Breckneckle the Tishmosh

As THEY flew along David noticed a great rainbow forming ahead of them. It was larger than any rainbow he had ever seen, it seemed to stretch across the sky as far as one could see, and it curved steeply at the lower end. As they approached it a building of some sort became visible at what appeared to be the foot of the rainbow. David had often heard the old saying that there was a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. But this was something else. The building looked like a huge ink-bottle. At the speed they were traveling David decided that they would be flying past that queer building in another two minutes. They reached it, then, but just as they did, a window in the tower flew open and a peculiar creature stuck its head out and shouted: "Halt!"

The angel looked annoyed but he halted Thunderstruck on a small cloud a few yards from the bottle-shaped building. "We're in for it!" he muttered to David. But David was staring at the odd creature above, trying to make out what it was.

The thing had a face rather like a horse, a long goose-neck

and a strange lumpy body that reminded David of a big sweet potato. In one hand it held a flute and with the other—which was not a hand but a kind of paw—it pointed a long pirate's pistol at the two figures sitting on Thunderstruck's back.

"Don't stir—on your lives!" the creature called down at them. Then, putting the flute to its lips, it blew a few notes—all the time keeping the pistol aimed at David and the angel. Then, lowering the flute, it opened its mouth and began to sing—in a queer voice that made David think of a nanny-goat. And as the creature sang it smiled and rolled its eyes. This is what it sang:

"In many a tale of times gone by
(To listen is your duty),
Men have sung my praises—aye,
They praise me for my beauty.

"They say there never was a face
Or form as fair as mine.
Oh, I am envied for my grace
And for my charm divine!

"And not a creature passes near
This palace with its glory
But he must pause and beg to hear
The secret of my story.

"But what that is I will not say—
The How, the What, the Wherefore.
And all who come along this way
Must stand and puzzle therefore.

"I am a deep eternal mystery,
Conundrum and a riddle,
I am the starting point of history,
The ending and the middle.

"You cannot pass until you guess
My secret and my name.
And you shall surely die—unless
You spoil my steady aim."

Here the creature pointed the pistol more carefully, squinting along the barrel.

"*Who am I?*" it demanded threateningly of David.

He looked at the angel in bewilderment. "Sorry," said the angel. "I can't help you. Everyone must answer for himself. It changes its name and its face for everybody that comes along. But—*flatter it!*" he whispered. "That's the only thing that spoils its aim—flattery."

So David began timidly: "You *are* beautiful——"

The creature raised its eyebrows and smiled foolishly.

"And you do look very graceful," David went on.

"You find me so?" it murmured.

"And you certainly *are* mysterious!"

"Ah!" The creature looked delighted at that.

"You really are too interesting a person to be living in an old ink-bottle all the time—" David said. But he knew at once that he had made a mistake. The creature glared at him.

"Ink-bottle! Are you referring to this palace—this castle at the rainbow's end? Ink-bottle indeed! We'll waste no time with you, young man. You're cynical, I see. If I hate anything it's a cynic!"

David didn't know what a cynic was and he said so.

"A cynic is a person who calls a castle-in-the-air an ink-bottle. I shall be interested to know what you will call *me!*" The creature leaned far out of the high window to frown at David. "Now, then, answer my riddle, you young upstart!"

"Flatter it, flatter it!" the angel whispered.

"I don't know how to flatter," David answered.

"Pay it long compliments. Make up a poem in its honor—anything. It's going to shoot."

So David made up the first poem he had ever made in his life. He ran it off in a panic, not knowing where the words came from.

"Thou art a radiant egg . . .
Thou art a golden fish . . .

Thou art a silver peg . . .
Thou art a broken dish . . ."

He stopped, wondering how it sounded.

"Go on," the angel whispered. "It may get better."

"You are—" David began.

"I'd rather you kept saying 'Thou art,' " the creature interrupted. "It sounds more like poetry."

And David, being very anxious to please, said:

"Thou art the rain,
Thou art the sun,
Thou hast a whistle
And a gun . . ."

"That's true—but it's not good poetry," the creature remarked. "Make more sense, if you please."

"Thou art a sweet, sweet flower
And I would like to pick you.
Oh would I had the power
To climb up there and—"

David stopped just in time. He knew that the next rhyme would have got him into trouble. He could think of only 'kick you' to rhyme with 'pick you.' But evidently the creature in the

tower had not guessed how David's poem would have ended. It smiled more foolishly than ever and said: "Very good. I didn't know you had it in you."

David felt now that he could do almost anything if he could make up a poem as quickly as he had just done.

"Oh, in a pinch, I guess a person can do almost anything he really *has* to do," he said quite proudly. And he saw that he had displeased the creature with that remark.

"Is that so? Really?" it answered coldly. "Well, answer the riddle, then. Who am I? What's my name?"

But David stood silent.

"Quick! Answer! Immediately!" The creature leaned far out and pointed the pistol under David's nose. Its arm seemed to have stretched fifty feet. "You are lost unless you answer before I count three!" And the thing began to count: "ONE—TWO—"

David jumped from Thunderstruck's back and shouted:

"All right, then, I'll tell you what you are and who you are. You're old Breckneckle the Tishmosh!"

"What? *What?* WHAT did you call me?"

"Old Breckneckle the Tishmosh!" he repeated. He had made up the name just as he'd made up the poem. "You're the old riddle-asker that always turns up in stories just to make it hard for the heroes to get to the places they want to go!"

"And who is the hero in this story, may I ask?" the thing shouted back at David.

"*I* am!" he yelled. "*I'm* the hero in this story—if you really want to know!"

He thought then that the pistol was surely going off under his nose, but instead, it began to wobble.

"And where is this great hero going, if you please?"

"To Tomorrow's House," David answered boldly. And then he heard the creature in the tower laughing. It laughed and it laughed and it laughed.

"This is your chance. Run for your life!" the angel cried. "Run past it! Run, David, Run!"

But David stood on the cloud and shouted again: "I guess your old riddle is answered all right! Old Breckneckle the Tishmosh! That's as good a name for you as any other because you don't mean anything at all. You're just an old nuisance!" And with that, David sprang from the cloud and dashed past the huge ink-bottle castle.

CHAPTER TWELVE

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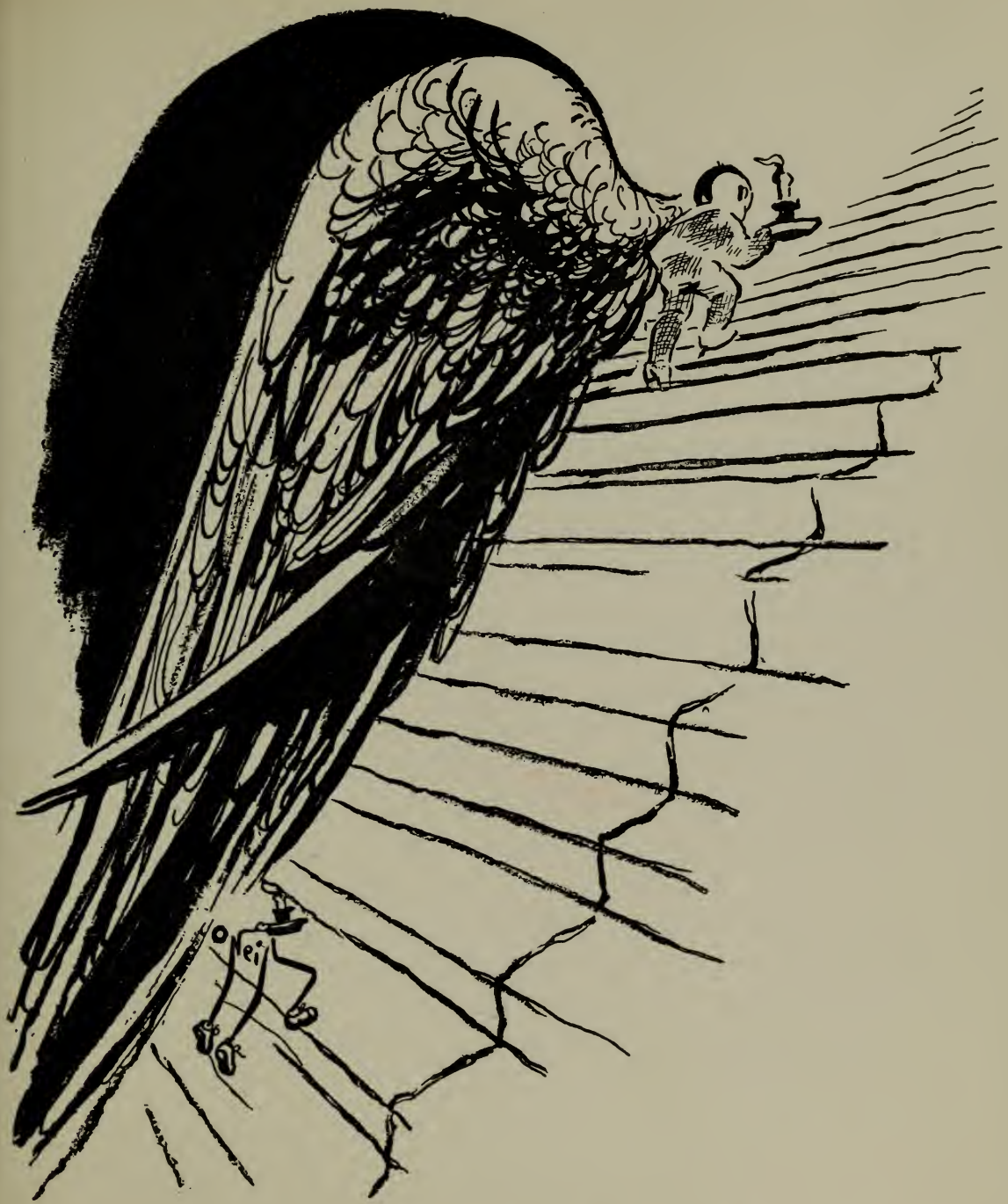
Tomorrow's House



He climbed the long stairway, thinking that, after all, he had seen some pretty strange things. Page 159

CHAPTER TWELVE

Tomorrow's House

No sooner had David passed the queer creature in the tower than he began to feel the most peculiar sensation. He seemed to be going through the air like a pinwheel and he couldn't tell which direction he was whirling. When he first began to spin he heard the angel calling after him: "David—come back! Wait! Don't do that! You mustn't!" But David could not have stopped if he had wanted to. And soon the angel's voice faded away.

David grew dizzier and dizzier. He saw stars, golden suns and silver moons, all whirling round and round. But which way was he going—up or down, backward or forward? He couldn't tell. The spinning seemed to last forever. Then suddenly it stopped, and it seemed then to have lasted only a second. But where was this that David found himself? Oh, where indeed?

He was standing—actually standing in the air. In all directions he saw huge round planets, some silvery, some the color of bronze, some redder than any fire he had ever seen. And the air here was all a very clear blue and it was cold and sweet to breathe.

But what was that marvelous thing shining, like a heap of blazing rubies and emeralds, in the distance? Plainly it was another palace, but no ink-bottle palace this time. It was more marvelous than any building David had heard of or dreamt of. It was enormous, with great spear-like towers, yet it, too, stood in the air, hung in nothing, just as David himself was hung there. And from the towers of the huge palace every now and then sparks of light would break and fall streaming into space—the way showers of sparks fall from exploded skyrockets. But the strangest thing about the palace was this:

There was a great wall around it, and David saw that this wall was formed by giant white wings all woven together in some way. So that there appeared to be no entrance to the great jewel-like palace. How could a person get through that wall of wings? David decided to find out. For now—he was in no doubt about it—he knew he was looking at Tomorrow's House. He must get inside. He must see what Tomorrow was. But how could he walk here? Would he fall if he took a step? He lifted one foot cautiously and set it down in the air again. No, he didn't fall. He could actually walk through the air without falling! How strange it seemed yet how delightful! Slowly, enjoying every step, he advanced through space toward the blazing palace. It was very still here, and he had a feeling that someone was watching him.

At last he came near enough to make sure that there was no opening in that wall of wings. They towered above him, solidly locked together. David stood a long time wondering how he could get through. Then, slowly he realized that a voice was speaking, somewhere he heard a clear voice saying:

"Nothing can stop you, not all the walls nor all the mysteries in the universe—if you really are determined to enter here. But be prepared!" The voice died out on the air like a great bell.

"Prepared for what?" David called back.

"For what—what?" Now the voice seemed only an echo of David's own voice.

"Where are you—where?" David looked all over the palace but saw nothing in the towers and dome behind the dazzling wings.

"Where—where?" the voice echoed again.

"Who are you, then? Who?" David shouted.

"Who?" the voice replied.

"Well, why did you speak to me at all? Tell me, why?"

"Why—why?" The echo trailed longer.

It was tantalizing to have heard those words that gave no real help about how to get into the palace. David was almost angry. He took a step forward, then another. "I *will* come in! I *am* determined!" he shouted boldly. Then—O Miracle!—two great

wings rose slowly upward and in the wall was a door of burning gold. And as David took another step this door began to open inward very slowly. And as the door opened music began to sound —as if there were hundreds of organs playing inside the palace. And from the towers flames shot up and sparkled.

David took another step. And then a voice came through the two wings lifted above the golden door.

"Stay where you are. Stay there. Be content," the voice called.

David, glancing up, saw a beautiful woman leaning through the wings. She leaned far out and flung a shining key into the air.

"Take this key, David. Go back to your own world. This key will open many many doors to you," the beautiful woman said. "But do not come through this door."

David caught the bright key.

"Tell them where you live that Beauty, herself, has given you that key. Let no man take it from you. Go . . ." the woman called.

"I want to know what's in this palace," David cried. And he strode forward.

At that instant there was a great noise. It seemed to David as if the sky itself were about to fall on his head. He put his arms over his head and ducked. There was roll after roll of thunder, and as it thundered David heard a neighing, whinnying sound.

He looked up through his elbows and saw something like a shooting star coming at him. It whizzed in between David and the door. Something wheeled round there and pulled up shortly. David recognized the little angel sitting on his shining red-brown horse.

"Get away from this door!" the angel ordered. "Go home where you belong!" There was a frown on the angel's face.

"How did you get here so quickly?" David asked. And for a minute he had almost forgotten about Tomorrow's House—he was so interested in the sight of Thunderstruck. He had not noticed before what a wonderful creature the horse was, panting and snorting with spirit. "I forgot to ask you where you found him," David said, pointing to Thunderstruck. But the angel ignored that.

"You shall not enter this place!" the angel said.

"I will go in!" David stepped toward the door. The angel poised his icicle spear threateningly.

"You must first pass me!" he said.

"I'm not afraid of you," David said, taking another step. "That's only a little icicle you're holding."

At that the angel pressed his heels in Thunderstruck's flanks and rode forward swiftly. He raised his spear and brought it down abruptly on David's shoulder. The spear broke to pieces but the

blow was hard enough to topple David over on his side. The angel sprang from his horse and knelt by David in the air.

"I did that for your own good, David. Believe me! If you entered Tomorrow's House you could never go back to your own world and be happy again. Have I hurt you, David?"

"Yes, you have!" David felt his shoulder growing stiff.

"Forgive me, say you forgive me! Say you know that I'm your friend," the angel pled.

David looked into the little angel's face and saw that he was quite miserable. "Yes, of course I forgive you, and I know that you're my friend."

As David spoke those generous words he felt a quick swelling sensation all over him. In the wink of an eye the angel was only six inches high, holding the bridle of a tiny horse that stood only an inch or two higher than the angel's helmet.

"Oh, how little your horse is!" David cried.

"He's large enough for me," the angel answered. "He was strong and swift enough to save you."

"Who said I'm saved?" David jumped up suddenly. "I didn't promise you anything!" he cried, and made a dash for the golden door.

But Thunderstruck, himself, vaulted there before David and whinnied loudly. A great clap of thunder seemed to answer him.

Then something dark and heavy crashed against the golden door and blocked the way for David. The angel flashed over and cried out:

"You shall not come in. With this—the very thunder of Heaven—I drive you from this door!" And he raised the chunk of thunder over his head. "If you won't listen for your own good —take this!" And he hurled the big dark rock straight at David's head.

David fell backward as he saw the rock coming. Something was wrong. He could no longer stand in the air. He commenced to fall. He fell . . .

fell . . .

fell . . .

and fell . . .

"There they are, David. I must go. They've found you. Goodbye . . ." he heard a very tiny voice saying.

And suddenly David found himself standing on the stairs in his own house and his mother and father were holding him by the hands.

"Where's he gone?" David asked.

"Where's who gone, Son?" his father replied.

"My friend—the little angel."

"Why, what an odd thing to imagine!" His mother laughed, glancing at his father. "Doesn't he have strange notions in that head of his?"

David's father answered: "I suppose we all have strange notions in our heads—when you come right down to it."

Just then the hall clock began to strike.

"Is that half-past five?" David peered down at the face of the old clock through the banisters. "Where've I been since Three went out?"

"Went out?" his mother echoed.

"Well then, since three," David corrected himself.

"Why, Sonnie, weren't you in the library most of the afternoon?"

"No, I wasn't," David said.

"Well, where were you then?"

"I don't know," he mumbled. "Neither up nor down, I guess, just nowhere."

His parents looked so puzzled that he decided to say nothing more about his adventures. Outside he heard a robin singing in the chilly garden, and he remembered the crystal eagles in the Forest of Fountains. On the stair-landing he glanced out the window.

"Why, there it is!" he exclaimed.

"What, Son?" His father looked out too.

"The mist I ordered," David said. "I'll have to tell him."

"Tell whom, Son?"

But David said no more about it. He climbed the long stairway, thinking that, after all, he had seen some pretty strange things. And that was some comfort. And maybe, another day, he would discover the secret of Tomorrow's House. And maybe he will. Who knows?

—: The End :—

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